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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
OF ONTARIO



ASSEMBLÉE LEGISLATIVE  
DE L'ONTARIO

No. 77A

N° 77A

ISSN 1180-2987

## Legislative Assembly of Ontario

Second Session, 38<sup>th</sup> Parliament

# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

Tuesday 16 May 2006

Speaker

Honourable Michael A. Brown

Clerk

Claude L. DesRosiers

## Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Deuxième session, 38<sup>e</sup> législature

# Journal des débats (Hansard)

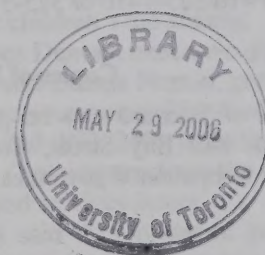
Mardi 16 mai 2006

Président

L'honorable Michael A. Brown

Greffier

Claude L. DesRosiers





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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 16 May 2006

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 16 mai 2006

*The House met at 1330.  
Prayers.*

### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

#### FIRST BALLANTRAE SCOUTS

**Mr. Frank Klees (Oak Ridges):** I rise to pay tribute to the First Ballantrae Scouts, who are celebrating their 50th anniversary today. The benefits to our communities from scouting organizations are immeasurable. Scouting fosters the values of honesty, integrity and volunteerism, and provides our young people with the opportunity to develop unique skills and values which will last them a lifetime. Scouting is based on three principles: duty to God, duty to others and duty to self.

On this occasion, I want to give special recognition to the leaders and volunteers of the Ballantrae scouting groups, past and present, who make the experience of scouting possible for the youth of the Whitchurch-Stouffville community. I ask all members of the Legislature to join me in recognizing the First Ballantrae Scouts, Cubs and Beavers, and the men and women who volunteer their time to make a positive difference in the lives of our young people.

Joining us today in the gallery representing the First Ballantrae Scouts are leaders David Martineau, Ian Rock, Doug McDougall, Suzanne McDougall, Mike Cataliano and Tim Neuman; also Scouts Hunter Strupp, Sam Hayter, Jack Tanaby Holder, Chris McMahon, Brayden Cocomello and Eddie Ameland; Cubs Brandon Martineau, Spencer Hartwick and Tyler Harwick; Beavers Calum Rock and Sam Cataliano; and last but not least, Brownie Haley Cataliano. They are joined by councillor Phil Bannon from the town of Whitchurch-Stouffville.

Please welcome them, and on behalf of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, happy 50th anniversary.

#### BUCHANAN PARK SCHOOL OPERA CLUB

**Ms. Judy Marsales (Hamilton West):** I recently attended the most amazing event in my riding. I had the privilege of attending the opera of *Romeo and Juliet* put on by Hamilton students of Buchanan Park School. This production was hugely impressive, with all the students from grade 1 through grade 6 involved. Every scene demonstrated gorgeous, colourful costumes, musical talent, artistic sets, amazing staging, with pride in these

young actors and actresses. Their eyes were just sparkling. As I sat in awe of all these wonderfully dedicated students from all walks of life, my mind wandered to all the work and time that must have been put in by parents, teachers, sponsors, volunteers and the students themselves.

Did you know that Buchanan Park Public School is the only school in Ontario that has an opera club? Since 1995, this opera club has assembled together all students and they run the show. From the technical crew, the dancers, the chorus to the lead parts, every student gets involved with the production. Huge credit goes to Dawn Martens, artistic director; maestro David Fawcett; and Mrs. O'Grady, principal, for this initiative. Thank you to John Fanning, the celebrated tenor, for his guest appearance as a green dinosaur, and a special thank you to Julia Page as Juliet and William Mastromattei as Romeo.

An added bonus was that they earned \$22,282 in support of McMaster University's children's cancer and leukemia research fund for the children's hospital at Hamilton Health Sciences. Bravo to all.

### CHILD PROTECTION

**Mr. John O'Toole (Durham):** I rise in the House in response to a report on the CBC national news last night regarding medications given to a child identified only as J. J. was under the care of the Durham Children's Aid Society. I must comment that we respect the sensitivity of this issue. I am confident the Minister of Children and Youth Services will be following up on the many issues raised over the prescription of psychotropic medications to children in the care of the children's aid society.

Recently, I met with James Dubray, executive director of Durham Children's Aid, and Dennis Norton, president of the board. We discussed various oversight issues at the time, which was Bill 83 and Bill 210, including the suggestion that the Ontario Ombudsman have the power to review CAS complaints and services issues.

Last night's CBC report said the provincial government has the authority to establish an independent board to investigate and review cases like J.'s. It is my understanding that under the Child and Family Services Act the Professional Advisory Board can recommend that medications be adjusted, reduced or even stopped. However, the decision to establish the board rests with the Minister of Children and Youth Services.

I urge the minister to take a look and take action to establish a board that can provide advice on prescribing procedures, review practices and procedures of services



provided, and respond to requests from the public for further investigation. I intend to work with you respectfully, but we must do everything to protect children in our care.

#### JUDITH LEON

**Mr. Michael Prue (Beaches–East York):** I rise today to pay tribute to Judith Leon. She has announced her retirement. People from the Beaches–East York community will know her as an absolute pillar.

She is best known for her work in Neighbourhood Link/Senior Link. Since 1975, with the founding of that organization—and she was there—it has grown from a very small organization to help seniors into what is today a multi-service agency that provides housing, employment, immigration, youth and senior services. Today, from that very small beginning, there are 500 volunteers and 160 staff. The motto of the agency is to promote independence, dignity and community.

Ms. Leon and the agency were most recently involved in the funding and start of a new hard-to-house seniors building at 2802 Danforth Avenue. After more than 30 years, Ms. Leon will be retiring to the country of her birth, Great Britain. Many friends, workers and the thousands of people she has helped are invited to join her on Wednesday, May 24, from 4 to 7 at the Balmy Beach Club at the foot of Willow Avenue in the Beach. We are going to be there to pay tribute to this wonderful woman and to the magnificent work she has done for all of our community for more than 30 years. I hope to see everyone there.

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#### BRUCE POWER SUPPORT CENTRE

**Mrs. Carol Mitchell (Huron–Bruce):** Last Thursday, I had the opportunity to attend Bruce Power's fifth-year anniversary and grand opening of their new office facility, the Bruce Power Support Centre. This marks a long-term commitment to the site and to the community, and allows for the majority of support staff to be together in one location.

Bruce Power provides thousands of jobs in the community and surrounding areas and is a huge economic driver. This new building alone will hold approximately 1,100 people. Bruce Power is well respected throughout the community for their continued involvement and active support of different initiatives. The Lieutenant Governor was also present to help celebrate this great event. Bruce Power was a major contributor to the Lieutenant Governor's book drive for native children.

I would like to say congratulations to Bruce Power on everything they have achieved thus far. I wish them all the best for the future and continued success in the riding of Huron–Bruce.

#### BORDER SECURITY

**Mr. Ted Arnott (Waterloo–Wellington):** This afternoon we will be debating an opposition day motion on

tourism. During the course of that debate, our party will address the US-led passport issue, which is of serious concern to all of us. In response, I hope we can expect something better from the McGuinty Liberals than their line of late, which is to assign blame to Stephen Harper for this problem. How can this government claim that they want to work with other governments across Canada and on an international stage when they bash and blame their own national government for the problem they claim they want to solve?

Let's accept their premise for just a moment. If it is all the federal government's fault that the passport issue is looming on the horizon, then where was the federal Liberal government on September 23, 2004, when the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act was introduced in the US Senate? Where were the Paul Martin Liberals when this bill was being debated and when it was passed by the Senate on October 6, 2004? Where were the federal Liberals when it was being debated in the House of Representatives and passed that same month? Where were they when the Senate and the House were discussing the bill in conference? Where were they on December 17, 2004, when the bill, having been passed by Congress, was signed by the President?

Why didn't Prime Minister Martin forcefully defend Canada's tourism interests when he met with the US President on November 30 and December 1, 2004, before the American security bill was law? And why didn't he push for a Canadian exemption when he met with the President on two subsequent occasions?

In the course of this afternoon's debate, let us hear the Minister of Tourism address these issues and answer these questions, and if he won't, he should stop pointing fingers to deflect attention away from his own government's lack of support for tourism.

#### PETERBOROUGH PETES

**Mr. Jeff Leal (Peterborough):** I am very pleased to be able to speak to the House today to congratulate this year's Ontario Hockey League champions, the Peterborough Petes. Under the direction of president Dr. Bob Neville, general manager Jeff Twohey and coach Dick Todd, the Peterborough Petes capped an already tremendous season by winning the prestigious J. Ross Robertson Cup.

Peterborough is steeped in rich hockey tradition, and the 2006 Petes have just added to this glorious history. Our hometown heroes have recently celebrated their 50th anniversary, and will soon add a ninth Ontario Hockey League championship banner to the Memorial Centre rafters.

The Petes won the championship in record fashion, going a perfect 10 and 0 at the Memorial Centre and posting the best record in franchise history at 16 and 3. As well, they were a perfect 8 and 0 in overtime.

Since their inaugural season in 1956, the Petes have developed a long list of representatives in the National Hockey League: Bob Gainey, Steve Larmer, Cory



Stillman, Mike Ricci, Larry Murphy and Doug Jarvis, and coaches Scotty Bowman and the late Roger Neilson. Our current coach, Dick Todd, coached the Petes from 1980 to 1993, and then was an assistant coach with the National Hockey League's New York Rangers from 1993 to 1998. He has since returned to Peterborough.

The Petes will now represent Ontario and head to the Memorial Cup in Moncton, New Brunswick, where they will play the Vancouver Giants, the Moncton Wildcats, and the Québec Remparts this Friday night.

Congratulations to the 2006 Peterborough Petes and good luck in Moncton. As we say in Peterborough, "Go, Petes, go."

### NURSE PRACTITIONERS

**Mr. Khalil Ramal (London-Fanshawe):** This past weekend, my colleague Deb Matthews and I had the privilege to shadow a critical care nurse practitioner in the cardiac surgery recovery unit at University Hospital in London.

Nurse practitioners in critical care work in the hospital's intensive care unit with adult patients who are suffering from a life-threatening trauma or illness. They work collaboratively with others in the health care system to assess and plan the care of patients. They have many responsibilities, including ordering drugs, ordering and interpreting tests, performing complex procedures and providing support to patients' families. Many nurse practitioners are also involved in research and education. Nurse practitioners streamline the patient care process and enhance quality of care, lower total hospital costs and increase satisfaction of staff, physicians, patients and their families.

I would like to thank University Hospital in London and especially the incredible nurse practitioner we shadowed, who provided us with a greater understanding of the important work that nurse practitioners do in Ontario.

The McGuinty government understands just how critical nurse practitioners are to the health care system in Ontario. I am proud to be part of a government that has recently announced the Grow Your Own Nurse Practitioner initiative, which will attract additional nurses to nurse practitioner education and practice, and has also announced an expansion of the number of nurse practitioner education seats beginning this September.

### RIDING OF PARKDALE-HIGH PARK

**Mr. Gerard Kennedy (Parkdale-High Park):** It is a great pleasure to rise in my place today as the representative of the people of Parkdale-High Park to say thanks to the organizations and people who make up Parkdale-High Park. It is an area with strong community organizations such as St. Joseph's Hospital, which recently received approval from the McGuinty government for a \$70-million expansion, reflecting as well, though, community support that has come forward for it

and other community-based organizations. It is providing tremendous health care in the south end of the riding in terms of the southwest part of Toronto in total.

I also want to pay testament to individuals in the riding, to people who in different parts of the riding have had a tremendous struggle and have taught me everything there is to know about perseverance under difficult circumstances. Last year, 9,000 people were helped by my constituency office: 1,000 in terms of cases, 1,500 who dropped in and people who reached us by phone, and thousands more who came to committee council meetings, which I held every month or every six weeks within our riding. This is a part of Ontario that knows how to be determined and knows how to get things done.

Our relationship with Parkdale-High Park began in opposition. They chose the McGuinty Liberals because they relate to getting results, they relate to having concern for diversity and for the widest interests of Ontario. That relationship began in part as York South 10 years ago, and the rest of it seven years ago as Parkdale-High Park. That relationship with the McGuinty Liberals will continue for many years to come.

### VISITORS

**Mr. Frank Klees (Oak Ridges):** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I want to welcome Philippe Stanier's family. Philippe Stanier is one of our outstanding pages, and in the west gallery are his father, Michael, his mother, Andgelina, his brother, Gabriel, his sister, Olivia, and his very proud grandmother, Helen Borovic. Welcome.

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North):** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I'd also like to welcome some folks here today from the beautiful town of Penetanguishene: David Dupuis, Peter Homeniuk, Yvon Gagne and Paul Daoust, and they are accompanied today by Alex Roman. Welcome everyone.

**Mr. Khalil Ramal (London-Fanshawe):** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I want to welcome my cousin, who came to watch the democratic process in this place. His name is Tarek Ashmar.

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### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

#### ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AMENDMENT ACT (WASTE MANAGEMENT), 2006

#### LOI DE 2006 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LA PROTECTION DE L'ENVIRONNEMENT (GESTION DES DÉCHETS)

Mr. Chudleigh moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 114, An Act to amend the Environmental Protection Act to protect the Halton waste disposal site /



Projet de loi 114, Loi modifiant la Loi sur la protection de l'environnement afin de protéger le lieu d'élimination des déchets de Halton.

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

The member may wish to make a brief statement.

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh (Halton):** With that overwhelming support, I'm tempted to move first and second, but I'll go with my preamble first.

The regional municipality of Halton fought a bitter and expensive battle to create its own waste disposal site over 15 years ago, with costs borne by the residents. All other Ontario municipalities refused to enter into reciprocal agreements with the regional municipality of Halton when it required landfill capacity to bridge the time between closing its former waste disposal site and opening its current site.

Other Ontario municipalities have not taken the responsibility for their own landfill requirements. That abrogation of responsibility could cost the taxpayers of the region of Halton. It is not equitable to impose costs of that kind on any municipality without its consent. Essentially, that is what my bill does: It protects Halton taxpayers.

## MOTIONS

### PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

**Hon. James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, Government House Leader):** I seek unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding private members' public business.

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Agreed? Agreed.

**Hon. Mr. Bradley:** I move that notwithstanding standing order 96(d), the following change be made to the ballot list of private members' public business: Mr. Dunlop and Ms. Scott exchange places in order of precedence such that Mr. Dunlop assumes ballot item 62 and Ms. Scott assumes ballot item 40; and that pursuant to standing order 96(g), notice be waived for ballot item 40.

**The Speaker:** Is it the pleasure of the House the motion carry? Carried.

### COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

**Hon. James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, Government House Leader):** I seek unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding the membership of certain committees.

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Agreed? Agreed.

**Hon. Mr. Bradley:** I move that the following substitution be made to the membership of a committee: On

the standing committee on general government, Mr. Tabuns replace Ms. Horwath.

**The Speaker:** Is it the pleasure of the House the motion carry? Carried.

## HOUSE SITTINGS

**Hon. James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, Government House Leader):** I move that, pursuant to standing order 9(c)(i), the House shall meet from 6:45 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. on Tuesday, May 16, 2006, for the purpose of considering government business.

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Mr. Bradley has moved government notice of motion 141. Is it the pleasure of the House the motion carry?

All in favour will say "aye."

All opposed will say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1354 to 1359.*

**The Speaker:** All those in favour will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

### Ayes

Arthurs, Wayne	Duncan, Dwight	Patten, Richard
Balkissoon, Bas	Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Peters, Steve
Bartolucci, Rick	Fonseca, Peter	Phillips, Gerry
Bentley, Christopher	Gravelle, Michael	Pupatello, Sandra
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Hoy, Pat	Racco, Mario G.
Bountrogianni, Marie	Jeffrey, Linda	Ramal, Khalil
Bradley, James J.	Kennedy, Gerard	Rinaldi, Lou
Brotten, Laurel C.	Kular, Kuldip	Ruprecht, Tony
Bryant, Michael	Kwinter, Monte	Sandals, Liz
Cansfield, Donna H.	Leal, Jeff	Smith, Monique
Caplan, David	Levac, Dave	Smitherman, George
Chambers, Mary Anne V.	Marsales, Judy	Sorbara, Gregory S.
Colle, Mike	Matthews, Deborah	Van Bommel, Maria
Delaney, Bob	Mauro, Bill	Wilkinson, John
Di Cocco, Caroline	Mitchell, Carol	Wong, Tony C.
Dombrowsky, Leona	Oraziotti, David	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Duguid, Brad	Parsons, Ernie	Zimmer, David

**The Speaker:** All those opposed will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

### Nays

Amott, Ted	Klees, Frank	Prue, Michael
Barrett, Toby	Kormos, Peter	Runciman, Robert W.
Bisson, Gilles	Marchese, Rosario	Tabuns, Peter
Chudleigh, Ted	Martiniuk, Gerry	Tascona, Joseph N.
Dunlop, Garfield	Miller, Norm	Tory, John
Elliott, Christine	Munro, Julia	Witmer, Elizabeth
Hardeman, Ernie	Murdoch, Bill	Yakubski, John
Jackson, Cameron	O'Toole, John	

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Claude L. DesRosiers):** The ayes are 51; the nays are 23.

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

## VISITORS

**Mr. Jeff Leal (Peterborough):** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I would like to introduce in our east gallery today a grade 10 class from Thomas A. Stewart Second-



ary School in Peterborough, Ontario—they're great Petes fans—under the direction of Mr. Gary Fenn, their teacher. Please welcome them to Queen's Park.

**Hon. Mike Colle (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration):** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: It is my honour and pleasure to introduce the parents of our page Vanessa Sidwell, who are here with us today from the super riding of Eglinton–Lawrence. They are Paul and Suzanne Sidwell. Welcome.

## STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

### YOUTH SERVICES

**Hon. Mary Anne V. Chambers (Minister of Children and Youth Services):** Our government has confidence in our youth—all of our youth. That's why we are committed to providing support and improving opportunities for young people, including those at risk of engaging in violent behaviour or already in conflict with the law. We recognize that to give our youth every opportunity to succeed, we need to ensure they have the resources and opportunities they need to help them cope, and indeed excel, even in the face of adversity and significant challenges. This is what we have been hearing from educators, organizations that work with youth and young people themselves.

Unfortunately, in the Ministry of Children and Youth Services we too often see the negative outcomes that youth experience when the support they need to overcome the significant challenges that they face every day is simply not available to them. We also realize that these negative outcomes can affect not only the youth, not only their families, but also their peers and the communities where they live.

Earlier today, I was pleased to join the African Canadian Legal Clinic in launching a new program for youth in conflict with the law. Developed through a partnership between the Ministry of Children and Youth Services and the African Canadian Legal Clinic, the African Canadian youth justice program is an innovative program that will help young people who have come into conflict with the law choose better paths and experience better outcomes. The Ontario government is investing more than \$600,000 in this project's first year.

Under the new program, which will operate out of four youth court locations—in downtown Toronto, Scarborough, North York and Brampton—youth will be provided with appropriate community-based, culturally sensitive services and referrals. This is one of the many ways our government is giving our youth the opportunity to choose better paths.

A month or so ago, I announced that our government is providing \$9.5 million, up from \$7.5 million last year, to establish and support 27 youth intervention centres across the province, and \$12.5 million to support other

community programs for young people in conflict with the law. Our government is also investing \$28.5 million in the first three years of a new youth opportunities strategy, to expand employment and training programs and support the hiring of new outreach workers in at-risk communities across the province.

When we support and guide our youth so they can rise above the challenges many face every day, we help them to believe in themselves and, in turn, we create a brighter future for all of us.

### POLICE WEEK

**Hon. Monte Kwinter (Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services):** I rise today to help pay tribute to the men and women who keep Ontarians safe. This homage is tinted with profound sadness as we have learned of the death, while on duty, of Senior Constable Don Doucet of the Sault Ste. Marie police. The 12-year veteran member of the police service died as a result of a serious collision between his patrol vehicle and another car. To his family, friends and colleagues, we convey our profound condolences. This tragic event underlies the heartfelt gratitude all Ontarians express towards police officers.

Sunday marked the beginning of Police Week in Ontario. This year's theme is Safer Communities: Police and Communities Working Together. I was pleased to join members of the Toronto Police Service and its community partners yesterday to launch this significant week. Police officers play an important role in our communities by protecting us, so it is only fitting that we take a minute to recognize them.

The recent tragic deaths of senior constables John Atkinson of the Windsor police and Don Doucet of Sault Ste. Marie remind us once again of the valour of those who choose this profession. They paid the ultimate price because they believed it was their duty to protect their neighbours and their communities.

Police Week helps us acknowledge the great debt owed to senior constables Atkinson and Doucet and to the thousands of other police officers who put their lives on the line every time they report for duty. We also remember Ontario Police Constable Andrew Potts, whose name was added to the Ontario Police Memorial on May 7. The Premier and I were honoured to join the Lieutenant Governor and hundreds of police officers from across the country to pay tribute to these fallen heroes. The officers whose names are inscribed on the memorial have made the ultimate sacrifice. To them, their families and to the thousands of police officers who patrol our streets every day, we extend our sincerest thanks and appreciation. They do keep our families safe.

The McGuinty government is on the side of the police, and on the side of Ontario families concerned about crime and safety. We've made the reporting of gunshot wounds mandatory and are putting 1,000 new police officers on Ontario streets. Our government is also doing its part to promote partnerships between police and com-



munities by giving police the tools and resources they need to do their jobs and to make our communities safer. That's why we're investing \$51 million in new initiatives to get criminals with guns off the street, including increasing the number of police and prosecutors assigned to the Toronto guns and gangs operation centre.

We're building a stronger, safer community by creating opportunity for every Ontarian. It's about making sure that everyone has a fair chance for success. That can happen only if Ontarians are and feel safe. That's why we're investing in our greatest asset, the people of Ontario, and it's why we're investing in the safety of the communities where Ontarians work, learn, grow and raise their families.

Our government also recognizes that part of ensuring a prosperous future for this province is making sure that the sons and daughters of the parents in our communities have a bright future. That's why our government launched the youth challenge fund, which will provide \$30 million for community-led programs targeted to young people in the GTA. We also announced the \$28-million youth opportunities strategy to help offer positive alternatives to a life of crime to young Ontarians. And just a few weeks ago, Premier McGuinty announced a new \$3-million program to offer kids positive alternatives to guns and gangs.

1410

It's important to talk about these initiatives because Police Week showcases the joint efforts of police and communities. These partnerships are the key to ensuring the success of these crime prevention programs that help make our province safer.

The McGuinty government is focusing the fight against crime in six key areas: guns and gangs; organized crime, specifically marijuana grow ops; dangerous offenders; youth crime; domestic violence; and Internet luring and child pornography.

Our government's Safer Communities—1,000 Officers Partnership program is allowing police services to devote more resources to the fight against crime. We are providing more than \$37 million every year in perpetuity as an investment in crime prevention and law enforcement through this program. In fact, we're accelerating the implementation of the Safer Communities—1,000 Officers Partnership program by providing an additional \$14 million in funding in 2006-07. So if police services want to hire their allocation this year, they will be able to do so.

I'm glad to say that over 790 officers have already been hired, of which 390 are already on duty across the province and 400 are currently training at the Ontario Police College. I was pleased to join the Premier earlier this month at the graduation ceremony of the newest class of police officers of the Toronto Police Service. Fifty-three of the new 141 police officers were hired under our government's Safer Communities—1,000 Officers Partnership program. They now join 46 recently graduated officers, who were also part of the program and are now patrolling Toronto's streets.

These 1,000 new officers will play a key role in helping make Ontario safer. Half of them will be assigned to community policing duties, including school visits, crime prevention and traffic enforcement. The other 500 will be assigned duties in the fight against crime in the six priority areas I mentioned earlier, including approximately 209 to fight youth crime and guns and gangs. This program means more police officers patrolling our streets and it means more officers dedicated to the fight against guns and gangs that's so important here in Toronto.

Together with our commitment to fund the previous government's program, we are now investing an unprecedented \$67.1 million for 2,000 new officers every year, in perpetuity. It's only by working together, though, that the fight against crime will be successful. Police can't do it alone. We all have a role to play. Police Week is an excellent opportunity for Ontarians to see for themselves the way police work to protect them.

I join thousands of Ontarians who will express their gratitude to police officers at events and activities throughout the province during Police Week. Our sincerest thanks for a job well done.

## 2006 CENSUS

### RECENSEMENT DE 2006

**Hon. Marie Bountrogianni (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, minister responsible for democratic renewal):** I rise today to speak to you about the 2006 Canada census, which the government of Canada is collecting this year and which will be collected today, Tuesday, May 16, otherwise known as Census Day. Today on Census Day, households across the country will be participating in an important initiative that will make sure we have an accurate understanding of how our country is formed.

Le recensement est effectué au Canada tous les cinq ans. Il dresse un portrait détaillé du Canada—des particuliers, des familles, des ménages et des communautés qui forment notre magnifique pays.

Once compiled, the census provides a valuable set of socio-economic data about our country. These data are used daily to support and inform decision-making by governments, businesses, community groups and researchers.

There are many social or demographic groupings for which the Canada census is the only source of detailed data. These include data sets about family structure, ethnic groups and so on. Ensuring a thorough collection and getting accurate data is one of the best ways we can ensure a solid understanding of the social and demographic forces which shape our country, our province and our communities. The census is a national initiative, and its collection reflects every province, every municipality, every community and every household. We're all in there.

Here in Ontario, the census can affect our future. Many federal transfers are allocated on a per capita basis and the federal government uses the data to determine the



per capita size of each jurisdiction. Five years ago in the 2001 census, more than half a million Ontarians were not counted. The result of this oversight is less money for the things Ontarians care about most: health care, education, support for new Canadians, training and infrastructure.

Il est important que nous, les dirigeants, encourageons fermement les citoyens de l'Ontario à remplir les formulaires de recensement et à nous aider à assurer une représentation exacte de la province.

Households started receiving their census packages on May 2. Completing them is easy. Most households just need to answer six questions. One in five households, a random sample of the population, will receive the longer form of the questionnaire. Seventy per cent of deliveries will occur by mail and the remaining 30% will be delivered by census enumerators and, for the first time, citizens have the choice to do their census forms online.

This is for everyone. Every household and farm, every ethnicity and language, every possible family structure is all part of the story that makes our province and our country so great. I encourage all members of this House to urge their constituents to complete their census surveys and help make sure that Ontario is fully represented.

#### SCHOOL SAFETY

##### LA SÉCURITÉ DANS LES ÉCOLES

**Hon. Sandra Pupatello (Minister of Education, minister responsible for women's issues):** I'm pleased to rise in the House today to talk about the progress that we're making to improve school safety and help kids deal with issues such as bullying. We want to make sure that every student feels safe and is safe, both in school and on school grounds. I'm happy to take a moment to thank our caucus member Liz Sandals for chairing our safe schools task force, which led to such a tremendous number of recommendations. She has done a super job with her team.

Nous voulons faire en sorte que chaque élève se sente en sécurité et soit en sécurité tant à l'école que dans les installations scolaires.

This year we've taken more steps to make students feel safer, including taking the lead on addressing bullying in our schools, because bullying has no place in our schools. According to the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, roughly one in three students in grades 7 to 12 report having been bullied in school, and just under a third report having bullied someone else. The numbers are disturbing. Safe schools are a prerequisite for student achievement. That's also why we're committed to making sure that every publicly funded school has a bullying prevention program and resources for better school safety.

To tackle bullying head-on, the government has established an ongoing \$3-million, three-year partnership with Kids Help Phone. In fact, we're the first province to embark on a partnership with Kids Help Phone. This will double the 24-hour line capacity to provide anonymous

counselling to students in Ontario who are dealing with bullying. These extra counsellors are expected to help some 30,000 students each year.

We've launched a registry of bully prevention programs so schools can find programs that work in their settings. We've also invested \$7.8 million this year to help schools purchase, create or expand their bullying prevention program.

But that's not all we've done to make our schools safer. Our government appointed a safe schools action team to implement new measures to protect students. These measures include funding for province-wide school safety audits, funding for new security devices, bullying prevention programs in our schools, bullying prevention training for principals, and a review of the Safe Schools Act. But again, we haven't stopped there.

Nous améliorons la santé et la sécurité des écoles en : allouant des fonds aux écoles publiques de l'Ontario pour effectuer des réparations dont le besoin est criant; allouant des fonds pour embaucher des enseignantes et enseignants spécialisés dans des matières comme la santé et l'éducation physique; demandant aux conseils scolaires de supprimer les aliments sans valeur nutritive des machines distributrices des écoles élémentaires; et en instaurant 20 minutes d'activité physique quotidienne obligatoire pour les élèves de l'élémentaire.

Earlier today I was at Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic School. I met Milton from TVO. He's a superstar to our kids in Ontario. I love getting out to see how these programs actually work, and Milton is quite a character. He sat down with a grade 5 class today and talked to the kids about bullying. He talked to the kids, and then, in unison, every student in this class knew the number for Kids Help Phone. For everyone's benefit, that number is 1-800-668-6868. Those of us who know Kids Help Phone, they do a tremendous job. Help us pass along that number to our kids and to our parents.

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At Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic School, they know, like we do, that ending bullying and creating a more peaceful school environment is about changing attitudes, one student at a time. That's why all of the students participate in programs in that school that teach them values and how those values relate to everyday experiences. Students in grades 5, 6 and 7 have been taught co-operative games, so they go out at recess time and play appropriate games with the younger kids that teach each other about respect. Grade 5 students also participate in Roots of Empathy, where they bring an infant into the classroom. Over the course of the year, they follow the progress and development of a baby and learn about nurturing and how to care and be kind to other human beings. It's a great program.

Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic School is a good example of how our government sees schools improving student safety. Kudos to the principal at this school. Principal Vitale has done a tremendous job organizing all of these programs in those classrooms. In fact, all of our initiatives make me confident that our government's safe



schools strategy will help make Ontario's public education schools a safe place for our students to learn.

#### POLICE WEEK

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North):** I'm very pleased today to be able to respond to the minister on this Police Week. I'd like to begin by paying our condolences once again and our tributes to Senior Constable John Atkinson's family and Senior Constable Donald Doucet's family. Probably the most important thing by far that has happened this week in Police Week is the fact that we are paying tribute to these two magnificent officers, and also to the family of Andrew Potts, who was killed last summer in a terrible accident up in Muskoka and whose name just recently was added to the wall of honour here on May 7. As the wall of honour says, they are, "Heroes in life, not death." I know a number of people in this House probably have this button that I've got on today. A number of people are wearing them until after the funeral on Thursday of Donald Doucet.

I also want to say that this being Police Week, there are a number of events throughout our province. I want to say I've been involved myself in about three or four events recently. Last Thursday, we kicked off the 20th annual Torch Run for the Special Olympics at the OPP general headquarters in Orillia. We had around 400 young people involved in this fundraising event. We started on Friday. We went to Orillia Square Mall in Orillia. That also being emergency management week, we had fire services, paramedics, nurses etc. from all across our community paying special tribute to emergency management and Police Week at the same time. Tonight I'll be attending the Crime Stoppers dinner here in Toronto where Chief Blair will be the guest of honour and the guest speaker.

I heard the minister mention the fact that the government is finally putting in place the 1,000-police-officers commitment. Well, that's because, as you know, they were embarrassed into it. They made the announcement seven or eight times and, finally, after our leader came out with the Time for Action report on youth violence last December, after that point, they adopted recommendation number 1, and that is to have 1,000 net new police officers on the streets by the end of 2006. We expect that to happen and we'll be monitoring that very closely.

In closing, I just want to say to all police officers how proud we are in our caucus of the work you do in our communities, across our country and across our province. They do fine work and each and every day they put their life on the line in the line of duty. I want to say to all police officers, I want to assure you that John Tory and the PC caucus are on the side of police officers and their families in Ontario.

#### SCHOOL SAFETY

**Mr. Frank Klees (Oak Ridges):** In response to the Minister of Education's announcement today—inter-

esting. Today is May 16. I have an exact release dated November 16 from the previous Minister of Education, with exactly the same information. This government does in fact master the art of spin.

What I would ask the minister is whether she will do what the previous minister did not do, and that is respond to a request from Lions-Quest, which is a program that was developed by the Lions Club organization a number of years ago. It is specifically designed to deal with bullying in schools. It has classroom-specific and appropriate materials that have been developed. It is highly successful. It is being used in school boards across the province.

The Lions organization simply wants to have an opportunity to meet with the Minister of Education. The former minister denied repeated requests to meet. Will this minister agree to meet and look at the Lions-Quest program, which is so highly successful? I know it's being used very effectively in York region, for example. Rather than continue trying to reinvent the wheel, will this minister look at this program and give it her support, the appropriate financial support and policy support that this very effective program deserves?

I would also encourage the minister to listen to principals from across the province who have been telling us in standing committee that schools are becoming less safe by the day because of this government's policy relating to supervision and the lack of funding for supervision in our schools.

The minister is now new at her job. Will she take the practical steps rather than just continuing to make re-announcements of old announcements as was the habit of the former Minister of Education?

**Mr. Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina):** In response to the Minister of Education, and in part to the Minister of Children and Youth Services: I thought today she was going to announce a rehauling, a total review or that the review has been done of the Safe Schools Act, but we have nothing. What we have is a re-announcement of an anti-bullying program, the kids' helpline. We had from the Liberals a previous promise that they were going to take action—and I emphasize—they were going to take real action in December 2004 on the Safe Schools Act, and they did nothing.

The government promised, through Monsieur Kennedy, who was here a while ago, a complete review of the Safe Schools Act—oh, there you are, Gerard. Very nice to see you, Gerard. They promised a complete review of the Safe Schools Act in September 2005—and nothing.

What we know is that the human rights commissioner has reviewed the act, has talked to a whole lot of parents of kids who have been affected by the Safe Schools Act, and former human rights commissioner Monsieur Norton said that a whole lot of kids who come from families who are black are disproportionately affected by the Safe Schools Act. Kids who have disabilities are disproportionately affected by the Safe Schools Act. They are expelled disproportionately and/or suspended unfairly



and disproportionately. We wanted a complete review from Minister Kennedy. We were hoping for a complete overhaul of this Safe Schools Act by the current minister, and we got nothing.

Here's what one expert on children at risk at an Ontario university told the Human Rights Commission:

"Once kids are out of the mainline and expelled, then they are on a different path, for sure. First, they don't have much to do during the day. They may make contact with older kids or other kids who are having difficulties. That can escalate their anti-social behaviour.... There is some literature that points out if you put anti-social kids together it escalates their anti-social behaviour. When they are pushed to the outside and come in contact with other anti-social kids, that escalates their behaviour. It can have an impact on the community in which they live."

We were hoping that the minister would have programs for bullies and not just their victims. We were hoping the minister would have something for children who are at risk. What we need are mandatory alternatives for all suspended and expelled students, and we need alternative programs in the school. We don't have that, and that's what we need. We need to restore the community advisers, youth outreach workers, attendance counsellors and social worker positions that were cut under the government and were promised to be restored by the Liberal government.

We don't want kids to simply access the \$600,000 the Minister for Children and Youth Services is making available to deal with the law once they're in trouble. We want programs in the school system such as tech courses, home economics courses and industrial arts so that kids have real programs to hang on to, not the ability to go out and say, "Here's money from the \$600,000 so you can now deal with the law." That's not what we need. We need programs in the school that help the kids, and we need the Minister of Education to deal, once and for all, with the Safe Schools Act that's throwing out thousands and thousands of black kids in particular and kids with disabilities. Deal with that and then we can talk.

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### POLICE WEEK

**Mr. Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre):** New Democrats join with others in paying tribute to police officers across Ontario, women and men who serve their communities with professionalism and at great risk to themselves, as we've regrettably had to witness over the course of the last week and a half. But I say to the minister, his words begin to ring hollow when we learned yesterday on the justice policy committee that the policing standards manual recommended board policy for occupational health and safety for police officers in those police services boards has not been adopted yet by a majority of police services boards in Ontario.

Even more dramatic and shocking was that the ministry's designated equipment list, equipment designed

to protect police officers when they have to deal with biohazardous materials, among other things, at a cost of no more, we're told by Bruce Miller from the PAO, than \$10 per kit, to be available to those police officers in the trunks of their cruisers, providing some of the most basic safety equipment so that a police officer could have a bit of a chance of going home as healthy as he was when he began work, is not yet the reality for police officers in a uniform way across Ontario.

We should start paying attention to these police officers' needs, rather than just giving them hollow words of—

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Thank you.

It is now time for oral questions.

### ORAL QUESTIONS

#### TOURISM

**Mr. John Tory (Leader of the Opposition):** My question is for the Premier. According to your own Ministry of Tourism, there were 2.1 million fewer US border crossings in 2005 than in 2004. That's about a 10% drop. US border crossings to Ontario reached their lowest level since 1972. These visitors, as the Premier will know, account for more than 26% of tourism spending in Ontario and 90% of total international visitation, according to the Tourism Federation of Ontario.

We're on the side of tourism operators and the hospitality industry of Ontario. Given that these numbers are from your own tourism industry, and you'll have seen them, I'm sure, I wonder if you think the appropriate response to this kind of development, where we're seeing these kinds of border crossings and visitations diminish, is what your government has done, which is to cut millions and millions of dollars out of the tourism budget. Do you think that's an appropriate response to that kind of number?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Research and Innovation):** I'll be pleased to take the first question. I know the Minister of Tourism is eager to speak to this as well.

I say, with the greatest of respect to the leader of the official opposition, that there's no doubt about it: American visits to Canada have dropped, and surely you're not going to claim that somehow our policies in Ontario are responsible for the diminished number of travellers in Manitoba and BC as well. But I can say that we are doing much to continue to work with our partners in the tourism sector here in Ontario. The last budget specifically contained \$49 million worth of new investments in cultural centres here in Toronto. We've invested in other events, ranging from bringing Conan O'Brien to Toronto to investing in the Toronto International Arts Festival.

I can say as well that there is some really good news on the horizon. When it comes to attracting international tourists, those from beyond the US, that increased by

7.2% last year, and so far this year it's up by 11.3%. So there is good news and more and more people are coming—

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Thank you. Supplementary.

**Mr. Tory:** The fact is, though, that while it is good news to have people coming from other countries, as I mentioned, from the tourism federation figures, 90% of international visitation comes from the United States. So it's fine to say we're expanding our markets elsewhere, but the fact of the matter is that the Americans are not coming, and when they're not coming is precisely the time you don't cut back. It is the time you invest, and the fact is that your government has cut back. The fact is as well that you can blame the external circumstances if you want, but other provinces, particularly Quebec and British Columbia, have lost a lesser number of US visitors than we have, so it shows that the decisions of your government to cut back are having a bigger effect, because of your policies on US visitation, than is the case elsewhere.

Wouldn't it have made a little more sense to pay more attention to the tourism file, to support the Ministry of Tourism, rather than cutting millions and millions of dollars from their budget, as you've done? Why have you done that?

**Hon. Mr. McGuinty:** To the Minister of Tourism.

**Hon. James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, Government House Leader):** It's always interesting watching my friend the Leader of the Opposition, because I always have to figure out when I come in if this is going to be a spend more day or a you're spending too much day. Today, apparently, he wants to spend more money, yet he has chastised this government on numerous occasions. He had his finance critic the other day saying that we were spending—I would never use this term myself—like drunken sailors. He had former Minister Flaherty who used to chastise the government over expenditures.

What we have in essence is a very good expenditure on marketing in the United States and other places. We've initiated some new marketing programs, which I just announced this particular week. We have cultural ads out there that people are just raving about, bringing in more and more people. We anticipate that we're going to see a significant increase.

What we need is your help when dealing with another issue that I know you'll want to address in your last question.

**Mr. Tory:** The fact of the matter is that the spending cutbacks are right here in the budget. It's \$100 million year over year in terms of cutbacks. I can tell you right now, if you want to know if there should have been more spending on tourism, you could have taken some of the \$160 million you're spending on more bureaucrats in the LHINs, on big salaries and office decoration, or the tens of millions of dollars you're managing to find for your friends to hand out ad contracts to the people who got you elected on the famous "I will not raise your taxes"

ads. There are some places where you could have found money and given it to tourism operators instead.

The bottom line is that Americans are not coming here in as great a number as they did before and that you have responded to that by cutting back on support for tourism in the province of Ontario. This is costing these tourism operators an estimated \$1 billion a year. It's costing your own government \$112 million in lost revenues because of those visits. Why don't you stand up and fight for the tourism industry, as is your job, and get back that money your government is cutting so this industry and the jobs that go with it can remain safe and secure?

**Hon. Mr. Bradley:** To the Leader of the Opposition, first of all, he knows darn well that the ministry was divided with recreation. He knows there was a \$30-million, one-time grant to Ottawa for the Ottawa Congress Centre, that the program that's involved in capital along with recreation has wound down this year. He knows that. The marketing is the same.

Do you know who I want to stand up for the province of Ontario? I want you to join us in standing up on the issue of the passport. You're busy apologizing for the inaction of your federal friends. Instead of standing shoulder to shoulder with all members of this Legislature to fight an issue that will have a profound effect on tourism and is already having a profound effect, you're an apologist for your federal colleagues. May I give you some advice, as one who has sat in opposition with a federal government of the same label? You should stand up for Ontario and not for your political friends in Ottawa, sir.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. New question?

**Mr. Tory:** My question again is to the Premier. I'm sure the tourism operators across the province will take great encouragement from that answer and from the demonstration of the Liberal members. Because the fact is, you've cut tens and tens of millions of dollars out of the budget—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. Leader of the Opposition, the question is to whom?

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**Mr. Tory:** Further evidence of who is on whose side here, and certainly that you're not on the side—

**The Speaker:** The question is to whom? To which minister?

**Mr. Tory:** I said at the outset, before I sat down, that it was to the Premier. I said it was to the Premier earlier, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** We'll start over. To the Premier.

**Mr. Tory:** Premier, further evidence that you're not on the side of the tourism industry comes from the press release issued by the Ontario Restaurant, Hotel and Motel Association yesterday condemning you and your government for trying to sneak a new retail sales tax on beer and drinks into your City of Toronto Act, adding a fourth taxation.



Let me quote them. This is their press release. They say, "The industry simply cannot sustain another tax." They go on to say, "Our sales lag significantly behind the rest of Canada. Our profit margins are razor thin and among the lowest in the country. Another tax will decimate our industry, with many operators simply closing their doors and walking away."

With the devastating tourism numbers I referred to in the earlier question, we now have these people saying that another measure taken by your government, in addition to cutting back millions on tourism investment, is going to devastate their industry. Why do you make it even harder for these people to continue to create jobs and stay in business? Why are you doing that?

**Hon. Mr. McGuinty:** I appreciate the passion that the leader of the official opposition is willing to muster with respect to the potential increase in alcohol taxes by the city of Toronto, but I wonder where that passion was when, in their recent budget, the federal government raised alcohol taxes across the country. Where was it at that particular point in time? Why did he not seize the opportunity at that point in time to declare to his colleagues on Parliament Hill the considerable damage that that new tax would impose upon our tourism industry in Ontario?

**Mr. Tory:** Of course, to engage in the compare-and-contrast, as the Premier likes to do, that was a budget that cut taxes 29 times for every Canadian—something you've never done and something that compares to your record, having brought in the biggest tax increase in the history—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. It's going to be a long afternoon. I can wait. The Leader of the Opposition.

**Mr. Tory:** We have the government of Canada with 29 tax cuts and we have Mr. McGuinty, the Premier, and his government with the biggest tax increases in the history of Ontario—and now this, just to add to it.

We have this industry, which employs 400,000 people in Ontario, saying that your beer and drink tax will negatively affect more than 4,100 businesses. We're on the side of the hospitality industry in saying that they can't take any more of these kinds of taxes, such as you're proposing to add. Why don't you just stand in your place and say no to this tax and that you're going to remove the power to create this tax on beer and drinks which will hurt the hospitality industry? You have the chance to say, "I'm not going to bring it in; I'm going to take it out of the bill and help the hospitality industry." Will you do it?

**Hon. Mr. McGuinty:** To support the observation made earlier by the Minister of Tourism, it really is hard to figure out where the leader of the official opposition stands from one question to the next. At first he said that we should be spending more money on tourism. Then he tells us that we should be cutting taxes. Now he's telling us that the discretion we've given to the city of Toronto, as a demonstration of respect, something he happened to campaign on—now he says he no longer believes that.

Something else I would ask the leader of the official opposition to take note of is that, in the budget we just recently introduced in this House, the province has removed the gallonage fees on beer, wines and spirits. That alone will save the hospitality sector an estimated \$25 million. It will be interesting to see where the leader of the official opposition votes on this.

**Mr. Tory:** This is the typical sleight of hand that this government engages in every single day. It's the sleight of hand that appears to "giveth with one hand and taketh away with the other."

The fact remains, though—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Stop the clock.

**Hon. George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** Negative-option billing: That was a sleight of hand.

**The Speaker:** Minister of Health. Order.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** It might be you. Order. The Attorney General, order. Leader of the Opposition.

**Mr. Tory:** We have businesses that are struggling because of a reduction in visitors from the United States. That's a fact, and it's due to a variety of circumstances, including in particular the policies of this government to cut back substantially on investment in the tourism industry.

To make matters worse, what we have then is the proposal by this government to allow the introduction of a fourth line of taxation on drinks and beer. It is going to hurt these institutions. It's them saying it, not me and not us.

It is high time, if you want to be on the side of the tourism industry and the hospitality industry, that you simply got up and said, "We've made a mistake. We're going to invest more in that industry this year. We're not going to cut back on the Ministry of Tourism and we are going to amend the City of Toronto Act to say that they can't create another tax on alcohol and beer and hurt this industry."

Are you prepared to stand up and say you're going to do either or both of those things? You should be doing them both if you care about the real health of Toronto, the real economic health of Toronto and the real health of the tourism industry in this city and in this province. Why won't you stand up and say you'll do those things?

**Hon. Mr. McGuinty:** It's really hard to understand how the leader of the official opposition, who at one time sought the leadership of Toronto city council—he sought the post of mayor. Presumably he felt that the people who work there, who are elected officials, duly elected, have some common sense when it comes to dealing with these kinds of issues and will fully consider the implication of any potential taxes. But apparently now he no longer has any respect for them and the work that they might do.

Let me say this, because we see things differently. Here's what Rod Seiling of the Greater Toronto Hotel Association said about my Minister of Tourism and the work he's doing: "The professionalism and the ongoing passion and commitment that Jim Bradley brings to his



position as minister ... has resulted in positive changes for the industry and created a real feeling that the government has as its point person someone who wants to work with and for it as it continues on its road to economic renewal."

### CHILD PROTECTION

**Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** My question is for the Premier. Last night, CBC television aired a riveting story about an eight-year-old boy and his 15-month ordeal as a ward of the children's aid society in Durham.

The children's aid society in Durham had placed this eight-year-old boy in a group home, where he was wrongly diagnosed and then overmedicated with a toxic combination of drugs.

In trying to gain custody of him, his grandparents faced challenge after challenge and hurdle after hurdle. Finally they got custody and they got him out of the group home. They got him off the long list of medications and into a much better, healthier environment.

My question to you is this: Why is the McGuinty government so opposed to the Ombudsman of Ontario having an independent review capacity of children's aid societies in Ontario?

1450

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Research and Innovation):** To the Minister of Children and Youth Services.

**Hon. Mary Anne V. Chambers (Minister of Children and Youth Services):** First, I must say that I have also received a report on last night's coverage of this situation. And whereas this is not something that we can discuss, due to the privacy issues involved for this young fellow, which everyone should respect, let me simply say to start with that this is tragic, absolutely tragic. I sincerely hope that there is no one in this Legislature who would try to make political gain of a tragedy. I will look forward to supplementary questions; I'm sure there will be one or two other questions on this.

**Mr. Hampton:** I'm not asking the Premier or the minister to discuss this case. My question was, why under the McGuinty government doesn't the Ombudsman of Ontario have independent investigative capacity over children's aid societies? There are hundreds of other cases like the case of that eight-year-old boy in Durham, where children's aid societies haven't done a good enough job. The Ombudsmen in other provinces across this country have asked for and have gotten the capacity to look at what children's aid societies are doing, to investigate them and provide independent oversight. My question to you is this: New Democrats have proposed a private member's bill, Bill 88, to give the Ombudsman this investigative oversight authority over children's aid societies. Why is the McGuinty government so opposed to the Ombudsman having that authority?

**Hon. Mrs. Chambers:** I'm very pleased to be able to share with this Legislature that it is this government that introduced Bill 210 for the better protection of kids in the

child well-being and protection system. It is this government that has created kinship regulations. It is this government that has created greater emphasis and requirements as far as background checks are concerned. It is this government that is strengthening the Child and Family Services Review Board—and giving the Ombudsman jurisdiction over that board. That board is an independent, arm's-length body which will not be subject to interference by my ministry or any other ministry of this government. And appeals can be taken even beyond that body, to the Ombudsman's office.

**Mr. Hampton:** Well, Minister, if it's the McGuinty government's response that your Bill 210 is the answer, maybe you can tell us why Bill 210 hasn't been proclaimed in force by the McGuinty government even though it was passed on third reading over a month and a half ago. If your answer is the review committees, maybe you can tell people like the grandparents of that eight-year-old boy why the so-called review committee isn't even up and running. The reality under the McGuinty government in Ontario is this: With that eight-year-old boy, if parents want to have the children's aid society decisions reviewed, whom do they have to go to? They go to the same children's aid society. It's like the fox looking after the fox.

I ask the question again: When other provinces have accepted the fact that children's aid societies cannot and should not be a power unto themselves, when other provinces have accepted that the Ombudsmen should have the authority to review children's aid societies, why—

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** The question's been asked, Minister.

**Hon. Mrs. Chambers:** I've already addressed the matter of the Ombudsman in my previous response. But what the leader of the third party has clearly not grasped is that the Child and Family Services Review Board is in effect. The board that he is referring to, I think, is the provincial advisory board which was mandated during his term in government but was never established. I am actually going to take on the responsibility of looking into why that board was never established by his government or subsequent governments. It is quite possible that that board could be helpful, because that board is intended to have as its duties advice to the minister on prescribing procedures, making and amending, suspending and revoking psychotic drug type prescriptions, just exactly the kind—

**The Speaker:** Thank you.

### HEALTH CARE FUNDING

**Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** To the Premier: It's interesting that the McGuinty government's response is to blame somebody who might have been Minister of Community and Social Services 15 years ago.

Premier, people are worried about the McGuinty government's private-finance hospital scheme, a scheme



that undercuts medicare by diverting health care funding away from patients and into corporate profits. Your Brampton private-finance hospital scheme will divert \$175 million away from patient care and into corporate profits. But this weekend the people of Sarnia delivered a clear message to you. They voted 96% in favour of a publicly funded hospital. They want health care funding, and they want the McGuinty government to put health care funding into public hospitals, not into corporate profits.

My question, Premier: Are you going to listen to the people of Sarnia who are clearly opposed to the McGuinty government private-finance hospital scheme?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Research and Innovation):** Of course we appreciate any advice and observations that might be offered by Ontarians generally, whether they're from the community of Sarnia or the leader of the NDP, but I think it's important to understand that we are building public hospitals. Notwithstanding any contentions to the contrary, we're building public hospitals. I think it's really important that the leader of the NDP convey that to all concerned.

I get the sense that there is more of a political movement attached to those who are opposed to this hospital construction plan than there is genuine concern about the future of medicare. I say that as the Premier of a government that was proud to bring into being here in the province of Ontario the Commitment to the Future of Medicare Act.

**Mr. Hampton:** The only thing public about your hospital scheme is the media spin.

Just three years ago, Premier, you called private-finance hospitals an example of the "creeping privatization of health care." You vowed to "stand against the Americanization of our hospitals." Well, this weekend in Sault Ste. Marie, 96.9% of voters did stand against two-tier, American-style health care and they told you to keep your promise, to build public hospitals, not private-finance hospitals that will divert health care funding away from patient care and into corporate profits.

Premier, you talk a lot about democracy. Are you going to listen to the people in Sarnia and Sault Ste. Marie or was your talk just another McGuinty broken promise?

**Hon. Mr. McGuinty:** We're proud to be building public hospitals in a number of Ontario communities that will be publicly owned, publicly controlled and publicly accountable. I was there for the announcement of the new hospital we're going to build in Sault Ste. Marie. I can tell you that people there were absolutely ecstatic at the prospect of getting a new hospital. I can tell you that our MPP David Oraziotti has been working on this relentlessly. We're proud to be able to lend support and build that new hospital.

I can say that the same kind of pride is being expressed by communities in Sarnia, Brampton, my hometown of Ottawa, North Bay and Barrie. What we have in place now is a government that is prepared to do what is necessary to get those public hospitals built in a timely

way. If the member opposite has an objection to that, if he's saying we should slow down the construction of hospitals in the province of Ontario, then he should just be clean with that and tell us that right now.

**Mr. Hampton:** You know, Premier, this is exactly the hospital scheme that, when it was advanced by the former Conservative government, you said was going to—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Order. Leader of the third party.

1500

**Mr. Hampton:** You see, Premier, people used to listen to some of those speeches that you gave. They understand that the private finance hospital scheme that the Conservatives floated is virtually identical to the private finance hospital scheme that you're floating. They understand, as the Ontario Health Coalition understands, that the private financing of the hospital in Brampton is going to cost \$175 million more. That's \$175 million that isn't going to go to patient care, won't go to more nurses, won't go to more doctors, won't go to more medical procedures. It goes into the corporate profits of your Bay Street friends.

Premier, you talk a lot about whose side you're on. Tell me, why aren't you on the side of the majority of people in Sarnia and the majority of people who voted in Sault Ste. Marie? Why are you now on the side of corporate—

**The Speaker:** The question has been asked.

**Hon. Mr. McGuinty:** I'm very confident in saying that we are on the side of the majority of Ontarians in every community who are eager to see new hospital construction take place in their community. I think this is a very important issue for Ontarians to wrap their minds around. I look forward to continuing to debate it with my friend opposite, now and during the course of the campaign.

I think it's important to understand that what we have in place now is a government that is prepared to do what is necessary to ensure that we have in place, as quickly as possible, public hospital corporations with volunteer governance bodies. We're talking about public hospitals here that are publicly accountable, publicly controlled and publicly owned. That's what we're talking about.

The leader of the NDP, notwithstanding his contention to the contrary that this somehow has to do with the protection of medicare, is heading up a political campaign, trying to head up a political movement. This has more to do with his political fortunes than with ensuring that the people of Ontario have access to a good quality public hospital in their community.

## BORDER SECURITY

**Mr. Ted Arnott (Waterloo-Wellington):** My question is for the Minister of Tourism. We've heard a great deal of partisan bluster from this minister this afternoon but very little in the way of constructive solutions. Last



Friday, the minister, I'm told, attended a forum organized by the Binational Tourism Alliance in Niagara-on-the-Lake to consult with the tourism industry on the challenge we face because of the pending US passport issue. Our caucus is hopeful that this issue will be resolved, that we will achieve a Canadian exemption or, at the very least, a delay in the implementation of the western hemisphere travel initiative. Surely the minister offered this group last Friday some new ideas on how he plans to solve this important issue. Will the minister inform the House what new steps he is undertaking to seek a resolution to this problem?

**Hon. James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, Government House Leader):** I have to tell the member, because he would want to know, that it is the government of Ontario that has been taking the lead on an issue which really should be taken right across the country. But we have taken that lead. The Premier has met with the Great Lakes governors. I met personally with the governor of Ohio when he was here in Toronto. I have met with several officials from both sides—from the private sector, from the municipal sector. He will remember that the Premier and I were in Washington last year, last March, meeting with senior officials in the US administration, hosting at the embassy of Canada at the time an opportunity for people to be aware of the issue. So on an ongoing basis, the Premier and I have been engaging senior political leaders on the American side, who I want to report to you are on our side. This is not a Canada versus US issue. This is an issue of the people who reside along the border and understand the ramifications of the passport issue, who are fighting together for a better solution. That's what we're advocating.

**Mr. Arnott:** Blaming the federal government, as this minister has done repeatedly in this House, will not wash. The minister knows as well as I do that the Paul Martin Liberals were entirely ineffective in solving this problem, and they were in power when the American passport law was moving through Congress, when it could have been nipped in the bud. Why has the minister focused his efforts on assigning blame to the federal government when he should be focusing all of his energies on working with the federal government to seek a solution?

**Hon. Mr. Bradley:** That is exactly what this government has been doing. I want to tell the member that as recently as February 10 I wrote a letter to Maxime Bernier asking that the council of tourism ministers be brought together for a national meeting on this issue and other issues. And the minister, to this point in time, has refused to have that meeting. But I did approach somebody in the last government, the Martin administration, a man by the name of Mr. Emerson. I spoke on October 20 to Minister Emerson to suggest that we needed to convey a united tourism message to our US neighbours. Apparently he wasn't prepared to do it as part of the previous administration, and then, when he was lured across the floor by Prime Minister Harper with heaven knows what to get him from one side to the other two weeks after the election, he still isn't prepared to do anything about it.

What we need is for you people to quit apologizing for the Harper government and come on side, stand up for the province of Ontario and continue to—

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Thank you. New question.

## WASTE DIVERSION

**Mr. Peter Tabuns (Toronto–Danforth):** A question for the Premier: Yesterday, your environment minister announced that GTA municipalities have to stop exporting their garbage to Michigan by 2010. Instead of announcing a plan to keep your government's promise for a 60% waste diversion program, her declaration only serves to drive municipalities further into the arms of the incineration lobby. Mr. Premier, instead of forcing GTA communities into the arms of the incineration lobby, when are you going to implement the requisite plan and funding required to divert 60% of the waste, as promised?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Research and Innovation):** Minister of the Environment.

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten (Minister of the Environment):** I'm pleased to have an opportunity to inform the Legislature of what I talked about yesterday. I have certainly said for a long period of time, and many of us on this side of the House believe, that it's not sustainable or acceptable to continue to send waste to Michigan. I'm surprised that the member opposite does think that is a long-term sustainable solution. But I indicated my full support for the city of Toronto and other municipalities that are developing their long-term strategies, looking at what tools they will use in this province to better manage their waste.

The city of Toronto has said for a very long period of time that each and every year it will send less waste to Michigan, and by 2010 it's committed no longer to send waste to Michigan. I wholly support the city of Toronto in those efforts. It's my responsibility as Minister of the Environment to work with municipalities, including York, Durham, Owen Sound and others, that send their waste to Michigan to make sure we give them the tools they need to manage waste here in the province.

**Mr. Tabuns:** Premier, when you ran in the last election you promised to ban the landfilling of organic waste, you promised to implement a used tire recycling program—I'll send the page over, if you would like—and you promised to divert 60% of trash from landfills by 2008. Now GTA communities are being threatened with dirty garbage incinerators because you failed to keep your promise. It's very clear from the Minister of the Environment that she does not intend to follow through on those promises. Mr. Premier, will you keep your promise to divert 60% of waste from landfills, so that dirty, unwanted garbage incinerators are not built in our communities?

**Hon. Ms. Broten:** Again, I'm pleased to have a chance to talk about what really is happening in this



province with respect to waste management. Perhaps the member opposite doesn't recall that this was the first government to ensure funding to the blue box program. The tools that we provide municipalities to manage their waste include a new decision that I have recently made with respect to household hazardous waste and electronics. We will now see those products diverted from landfill. Those are products that we all have in our homes, that we all have in our basements, and now we're going to give Ontarians an opportunity to make sure that those products that shouldn't be in landfills get diverted. This will build on the success of the blue box program, for which, for example, Toronto has received \$13.8 million since we came into office, and it's projected to do very well—\$60 million in 2005 to municipalities to run the blue box program, which is a symbol of recycling and diversion around the province and worldwide. It's something we support that I'm very proud of.

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### FOOD SAFETY

**Mr. John Wilkinson (Perth-Middlesex):** My question is for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. As you know, farmers' markets are integral to our rural way of life. Food preparation and food services often occur at these venues and are an important part of the local economy. We all know that food safety is of the utmost importance, but my constituents are confused as to what the guidelines will be. They're concerned that the new guidelines will not take into account the unique characteristics of farmers' markets, and consequently may cause some of them to close. Minister, my constituents in Perth-Middlesex deserve to know, does the McGuinty government appreciate the importance of farmers' markets as an integral part of Ontario's livelihood?

**Hon. George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** I'm pleased to take the question. In doing research today on this issue, I've been pleased to note that while farmers' markets are well established in rural parts of Ontario, those of us who live and celebrate life in urban areas also celebrate the opportunity to access farmers' markets. In fact, 40% of all the farmers' markets in Ontario occur in urban areas. In my own riding, at Toronto city hall and at the north market of St. Lawrence on Saturdays, we have the benefit of these things.

I do think we've seen some unequal enforcement across public health units on this matter. Accordingly, the chief medical officer of health, Dr. Basrur, has been working on a strategy with public health units to proactively educate and inform so that enforcement is much less of a requirement. We believe this is the appropriate way to move forward to protect the important farmers' markets, which are vital to the culture in local communities, not to mention the economy, and in so doing to offer the appropriate protections related to food safety. This is ongoing on a proactive basis and we're working in consultation with all affected parties.

**Mr. Wilkinson:** On behalf of my constituents, we do appreciate the McGuinty government's continued commitment to the health and safety of Ontarians.

The holding of special events where food is prepared at churches, service clubs and fraternal organizations is also a key component of my constituents' livelihood in rural Ontario. Without question, the need for safe food preparation is paramount. I have, though, received concerns from my constituents about the application of regulation 562. It has proven unclear, Minister. I believe the regulations need clarification. What is your ministry doing to address these immediate concerns?

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** First and foremost, I would commit to renewal of regulation 562 after an appropriate consultation period has occurred. We've been working closely with the organization called Farmers' Markets Ontario, which is the representative voice of farmers' markets. We are committed to bringing in a new reg. That wouldn't occur until the fall at the very earliest, and not until we've had the appropriate opportunity for consultation. The medical officer of health is guiding public health units through the production of a booklet to proactively help to educate and inform, to show people that there are risks. Last summer, we encountered young kids in Ontario, north of Toronto, whose parents secured unpasteurized milk. They ended up with very serious hospitalization at Southlake hospital in Newmarket.

Our obligation is to ensure safe environments, of course. We believe we can do that in a fashion, through proactive education, that does not affect these very important institutions. This is important in rural and urban Ontario alike. Accordingly, we're going to work very hard to ensure that these institutions are—

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Thank you. New question.

### CHILD PROTECTION

**Mrs. Julia Munro (York North):** My question is for the Minister of Children and Youth Services. Last night the CBC's The National told us the sad story of a young boy who was being overmedicated by the Durham Children's Aid Society. We all know that overmedication can be a threat to health and a threat to life. Minister, what specific actions have you taken to protect this child?

**Hon. Mary Anne V. Chambers (Minister of Children and Youth Services):** First of all, as I said before, this is a very tragic case and I will not discuss the details of the situation. But let me say that our government is committed to ensuring that children who are in the protection of our child well-being and protection system will be better off as a result of our involvement in their lives than they would have been were we not involved in their lives. I am actually doing an internal investigation as to what we can do to ensure that no more such tragedies occur.

**Mrs. Munro:** During the debate on Bill 210, Ontario's Ombudsman told you he needed the power to intervene in cases before the children's aid societies to



protect children and families. Your government rejected his proposal. You refused to listen to the Ombudsman's advice to provide an independent appeal of CAS decisions. Why will you not now listen to what the Ombudsman told you and give him the power to help protect children and families?

**Hon. Mrs. Chambers:** The Ombudsman does have a role, thanks to Bill 210 and our strengthening of the complaints process to protect children in the care of children's aid societies here in Ontario. The Ombudsman will have the final say on appeals that would have previously gone to the Child and Family Services Review Board. His office—or her office; whoever it may be—will have jurisdiction over the child and family services board's decisions, and those will be respected without any intervention from any minister of government.

But what I am also committed to pursuing is the professional advisory board, which that party, when they were in government, failed to establish. You see, the professional advisory board, amongst its duties, can investigate and review the use of intrusive procedures and psychotropic drugs and make recommendations to the minister. That board was never established.

#### MINIMUM WAGE

**Mr. Michael Prue (Beaches–East York):** My question is to the Premier. Mr. Premier, yesterday an important report on poverty was released by a blue-ribbon panel drawn from people from all across Ontario. It reported that 891,000 working adults live below the poverty line, if you set that line at a very modest \$15,000. But the statistic that I think is most shocking or should be most shocking to you was that all it would take to bring those people above the poverty line would be an increase in the minimum wage to \$9 an hour, to bring all full-time low-income workers above that poverty line. Mr. Premier, the question is simple: Will you immediately raise the minimum wage so that no full-time worker in Ontario earns less than \$15,000 a year and lives in poverty?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Research and Innovation):** To the Minister of Community and Social Services.

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur (Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for francophone affairs):** This is an excellent question, and I thank the member of the third party for his question.

First of all, let me thank the members of the task force for their commitment to this issue and for all the work they have done in preparing this report. I have met with the members of the task force, and we agree with the principles of this report. While there is always more to do, I'm pleased to say that we are actively working to help low-income Ontarians improve their lives.

I wanted to remind the member that since we came into power, we have increased the minimum wage three times. Again, in 2007, it's going to be up to \$8 an hour. I would say that we have more work to do and we'll—

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Prue:** Madam Minister, the report clearly set out that at \$7.75, some 891,000 people who work every day live in poverty, and all it would take is to raise that to \$9 an hour. Quite frankly, I think those people deserve a better answer than the one you just gave. But if you can't or won't raise the minimum wage, will you at least help them in some small way by extending a basic health care program for such things as prescription drugs and eyeglasses to all low-income workers, as the report recommends? If you don't raise the minimum wage to a living wage, will you at least help these nearly a million people, hard-working Ontarians, with their basic health needs?

**Hon. Mrs. Meilleur:** I want to remind the member of the opposite party that this government has done more than any government to help to increase the quality of life of the low-income Ontarian.

I can go on explaining what we have done. We have increased the assistance in schools, for instance, colleges and universities. We have provided more than 100,000 grants for low-income Ontarians. We have opened over 150 family health teams, which go a long way to help low-income Ontarians. And I remind the member that we have increased the minimum wage three times—

**The Speaker:** Thank you. New question?

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#### AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

**Mrs. Liz Sandals (Guelph–Wellington):** My question is for the Minister of Economic Development and Trade. My city of Guelph has a population of 106,000 people. Linamar is the area's largest employer, employing over 7,000 workers. Needless to say, Linamar is integral to the economic vitality of the Guelph area.

As you are aware, Ontario manufacturers have been battling a high Canadian dollar but have remained resilient throughout. Our government has worked closely with the manufacturing sector to assist them through this readjustment. Last Friday, our government partnered with Linamar to ensure that they remain a leading-edge auto parts manufacturer in North America and that they continue to be a key employer in the Guelph area.

Minister, can you please provide the rest of this House with some additional details about this exciting announcement?

**Hon. Joseph Cordiano (Minister of Economic Development and Trade):** Let me thank the member for Guelph–Wellington for her support and her advocacy on behalf of her community and Linamar. I'm happy to repeat the good news in this House, because it's worth repeating.

This was a \$1.1-billion investment made by Linamar, which will create 3,000 new jobs—that's 3,000 new jobs—and the Ontario government was very pleased to partner with Linamar, investing \$44.5 million to establish a new technology centre to support research and



development in new products and processes and to invest in skills training for workers. Linamar is also moving forward with respect to developing environmentally friendly processes in their operations and their products.

Dennis DesRosiers, who is a leading analyst, had this to say about this deal: "For about \$500 million of government assistance Ontario has levered about \$7 billion in new capital expenditures—"

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mrs. Sandals:** That's amazing, Minister: \$44.5 million and 3,000 jobs. Think about it. Add those 3,000 jobs, and Linamar will employ almost 10% of the population of Guelph—fantastic news for my city, and very well received locally.

It's also great news for Ontario's auto manufacturing sector. We know that Ontario is now the leading North American jurisdiction for automobile production, with our strategic auto investments playing a key role in that accomplishment. Unfortunately, there are still some who believe that our investments are not needed, that they are not a good investment of government dollars and are the wrong way to assist our auto sector. Minister, could you please comment on that very incorrect view?

**Hon. Mr. Cordiano:** Indeed it is a mistaken impression that people have. I want to take members back to the Toyota investment that was made, over \$1 billion. I have to remind members in this Legislature that we are competing with many other jurisdictions south of the border that are willing to do just about anything to get these auto plants to locate in their jurisdictions. Word comes from a manufacturer like Toyota that in fact there were southern states that were willing to offer 10 times the amount that Ontario invested to bring Toyota to Ontario—\$700 million was offered for that investment to locate in southern US states. When it comes to Linamar, this is what the CEO, Linda Hasenfratz, had to say about their investment: "We were looking aggressively at the Michigan area as another alternative."

I say to members in this House, we are competing with other jurisdictions on a daily basis. There are many—

**The Speaker:** Thank you. New question?

#### STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman (Oxford):** My question is to the Minister of Education. Minister, I've listened to you speak about stability in the school system and that every student deserves the same opportunity. Well, at 6:30 a.m. on Thursday, the educational assistants in the Thames Valley District School Board went out on strike. These EAs look after the most vulnerable people in the school system. The main issue seems to be that they need more time to look after those students.

It is the students who are losing. Because of this strike, the Special Olympics that were supposed to be held at the University of Western Ontario from May 23 to 25 have been cancelled. Minister, what are you going to do to

make sure that the special-needs students can continue to enjoy events such as the Special Olympics and are not put at greater risk than they presently are?

**Hon. Sandra Pupatello (Minister of Education, minister responsible for women's issues):** I appreciate this question. It gives us an opportunity to talk about this region in particular. But like all places in Ontario, we have worked very hard to create peace and stability in all of our schools across Ontario. I think the member opposite is very well aware of the track record we've developed in these last two and a half years. We expect that that will continue. We do have an anomaly right now in the Thamesville area, one that not one of us in this House could be happy about. What we want is our kids in our schools, and what we are hoping is that both sides will be working towards that end.

**Mr. Hardeman:** Minister, I come to this question period every day and listen to the questions and answers. Generally, the first part of the answer is, "It's someone else's fault," and the second part is what the government is doing that has nothing to do with the question.

This question, Madam Minister, is very simple. I simply ask you again: What is your government going to do to create the stability you speak of? What are you going to do for these students so they can continue to participate in something as dear to their hearts as the track and field Special Olympics? Minister, what are you going to do specifically for these students so they can continue to have their Special Olympics?

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** I don't believe that anyone who lives in this particular member's riding would think for a moment that this government is not here to support our students in our schools. We have done that by adding \$2 billion in resources. There will never be one reason that has anything to do with resourcing as it affects our kids in our classrooms.

This member opposite was part of a government that, during his tenure, lost 24 million days of education because of strikes, because of teachers walking or boards locking. That has not been the case in this government. We are making certain that our students are in the classroom, are learning and are achieving beyond anything we have ever seen in our history. That is our record as a Liberal government, and we're proud of that record.

#### PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION VEHICLES

**Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** My question is for the Premier. Last week, the government of the province of Quebec approved \$1.2 billion of funding for new subway cars for the city of Montreal métro. Part of the agreement is an understanding that the subway cars will be built by Bombardier at its factory in Quebec so that it will generate economic benefits for Quebec and sustain jobs in Quebec.

Now, the McGuinty government is contributing \$200 million of Ontario taxpayers' money for the city of Ottawa to purchase transit cars built in California. Meanwhile, hundreds of workers who could build these



transit cars at the factory in Thunder Bay in Ontario are laid off. Premier, why does the McGuinty government not see the economic benefits and the job-sustaining benefits of building these rail transit cars in Thunder Bay in Ontario?

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**Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Research and Innovation):** To the Minister of Transportation.

**Hon. Harinder S. Takhar (Minister of Transportation):** The member has asked this question two times before and I'm sure he has an interest in that. Let me just give you some numbers on what we have done for Thunder Bay and what is going on.

First of all, we believe in a fair and transparent process. We also believe that municipalities can make good decisions. Maybe you don't, but we do. Let me just tell you, the city of Ottawa has undertaken a very fair and transparent process. The contract has been awarded to a consortium of three companies, and these three companies are Siemens, PCL and Dufferin Construction. All of these are Ontario-based companies, by the way. I don't know what he has against those companies.

At the same time, Toronto has taken a very different process. They asked for a bid directly from Bombardier—only Bombardier—and that bid is about \$755 million. In addition to that, Bombardier has got \$134 million worth of contracts from GO Transit. If you add these together, it's about \$900 million.

**Mr. Hampton:** I'm sure that will make the hundreds of laid-off workers at the Bombardier factory in Thunder Bay feel really good.

Building the Ottawa transit rail cars in Thunder Bay would not only create and sustain jobs in Thunder Bay and benefit the economy of Thunder Bay, it would benefit Ontario's economy, because the parts and component suppliers for the Thunder Bay factory are overwhelmingly in Ontario. Workers in Thunder Bay just don't understand. They see the Quebec government supporting Quebec jobs, supporting the Quebec economy. They know that they could build these transit rail cars, but the McGuinty government says, "No. Use Ontario taxpayer money and build them in California."

My question for the Premier is this: I think Quebec has a good idea. Will the McGuinty government follow the Quebec government's lead and insist that Ontario taxpayer money support Ontario workers and build—

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** The question has been asked. Minister?

**Hon. Mr. Takhar:** I'm not sure if the member is hearing this or not, but let me tell you, I said that Bombardier will get \$900 million worth of contracts. Municipalities are in a better position to make their own decisions, and we strongly support an open and fair bidding process.

The one thing we're not going to do is build walls around Ontario. Bombardier is in a position to compete internationally and they got \$7.9 billion worth of orders because of their competitiveness. At the same time, even

the Ottawa order has gone to three Ontario-based companies, which are Siemens, PCL and Dufferin Construction. Those people also create jobs, by the way.

#### AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE

**Mr. David Zimmer (Willowdale):** My question is for the Minister of Finance. Constituents in my riding of Willowdale are concerned about the high costs associated with operating a motor vehicle. In fact, upon being elected in 2003, the cost of owning a motor vehicle was one of the most pressing concerns experienced by my constituents. Under the NDP government, auto insurance rates went up, and they continued to rise under the Conservative government.

Minister, our government promised results for the people of Ontario when it came to auto insurance rates. What my constituents want to know is, what has this government done about auto insurance rates and what results can they expect to see?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan (Minister of Finance, Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet):** I thank the member for his question and remind the House that this government campaigned to reduce automobile insurance premiums by 10%. Not only have we delivered on that commitment, we've exceeded it. Auto insurance premiums have come down 13.32% since we took office. That compares quite nicely to the 43% increase under the previous Conservative government and the 27% increase under the NDP government.

Auto insurance premiums have been reduced in each of the last nine quarters under the McGuinty government. Mike Colle and Greg Sorbara deserve enormous credit for all the work they did on this file.

**Mr. Zimmer:** Minister, as you know, auto insurance rates are not the only concern motorists have. Motorists are worried that, as consumers, they face other disadvantages when looking for auto insurance. Drivers in Willowdale want two things from auto insurance: a price they can afford, and the best possible policy protection.

Having heard the good news that auto rates are coming down, what is being done to protect the interests of consumers in the auto insurance market?

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** There have been a number of other measures designed for consumer protection. We've created a new website to provide more consumer-friendly information about insurance, including an online educational rate tutorial that helps consumers better understand how auto rates are set.

We've fostered a more competitive marketplace that gives drivers more choice. As a result, the number of drivers in the Facility Association, an industry pool for high-risk drivers, has fallen from 209,000 when we first took office to only 30,000 now.

We've banned credit scoring and the use of other economic and lifestyle factors for the purposes of setting auto insurance rates or coverage. Insurers and brokers are now disclosing commission rates, and after a request from the province, brokers are also disclosing con-



tingency commission arrangements and the number of insurers they represent.

This government stood up for automobile insurance purchasers. This government has more than exceeded its goal. It has undone the 43% increase brought on by the previous Conservative government and—

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Thank you, Minister.

Petitions.

## PETITIONS

### AUTISM TREATMENT

**Mr. Cameron Jackson (Burlington):** This is a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas children with autism who have reached the age of six years are no longer being discharged from their preschool autism program; and

“Whereas there are approximately 700 preschool children with autism across Ontario who are required to wait indefinitely for placement in the program, and there are also countless school-age children on the same wait-list that are not receiving the support they require in the school system; and

“Whereas these children should be getting the best special education possible in the form of applied behavioural analysis (ABA) within the school system; and

“Whereas this situation has an impact on the families, extended families and friends of all of these children; and

“Whereas, as stated on the website for the Ministry of Children and Youth Services, ‘IBI can make a significant difference in the life of a child with autism. Its objective is to decrease the frequency of challenging behaviours, build social skills and promote language development’;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to fund the treatment of IBI for all pre-school children awaiting services and fund a school-based special education program in the form of ABA.”

This has been signed by several of my constituents, and has my signature of support.

### SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

**Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora–Rainy River):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, and it reads:

“Whereas, without appropriate support, people who have an intellectual disability are often unable to participate effectively in community life and are deprived of the benefits of society enjoyed by other citizens; and

“Whereas quality supports are dependent on the ability to attract and retain qualified workers; and

“Whereas the salaries of workers who provide community-based supports and services are up to 25%

less than salaries paid to those doing the same work in government-operated services and other sectors;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to address, as a priority, funding to community agencies in the developmental services sector to address critical underfunding of staff salaries and ensure that people who have an intellectual disability continue to receive quality supports and services that they require in order to live meaningful lives within their community.”

I have affixed my signature as well.

### SPEECH AND LANGUAGE SERVICES

**Mrs. Maria Van Bommel (Lambton–Kent–Middlesex):** This is a petition from my constituents in Lambton county.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas over one million Ontarians of all ages suffer from communication disorders relating to speech, language and/or hearing; and

“Whereas there is a growing need for awareness of the profound developmental, economic and social consequences that communication disorders have on people and their families; and

“Whereas persons with communication problems require access to the professional services of audiologists and speech language pathologists who provide treatments to improve and enhance quality of life; and

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“Whereas effective treatment of communication disorders benefits all of society by allowing otherwise disadvantaged persons to achieve their academic and vocational potentials; and

“Whereas investments in treatments for communication disorders pay economic dividends in reduced reliance on other social services;

“We, the undersigned, in conjunction with the Ontario Association of Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists, call on the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to proclaim the month of May as Better Speech, Language and Hearing Month.”

I’m glad to affix my signature to this petition as well.

### LANDFILL

**Mr. Norman W. Sterling (Lanark–Carleton):** I’m glad to have my page, Elliott Leeflang, here to take it for me. This is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas there is currently a proposal to more than double the size of the Carp landfill in west Ottawa; and

“Whereas this site has been in operation for some 30 years and had been expected to close in 2010; and

“Whereas the surrounding community has grown rapidly for the past 10 years and is continuing to grow; and

“Whereas other options to an expanded landfill have yet to be considered; and



"Whereas the municipal councillors representing this area—Eli El-Chantiry, Janet Stavinga and Peggy Feltmate—and the MPP, Norm Sterling," and the MPP, Lisa MacLeod, "all oppose this expansion;

"We, the undersigned, support our local representatives and petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to ensure the Minister of the Environment does not approve the expansion of the Carp landfill and instead to find other waste management alternatives."

I have signed that.

### COMMUNITY MEDIATION

**Mr. Kuldip Kular (Bramalea–Gore–Malton–Springdale):** My petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas many types of civil disputes may be resolved through community mediation delivered by trained mediators, who are volunteers working with the parties in the dispute; and

"Whereas Inter-Cultural Neighbourhood Social Services established the Peel Community Mediation Service in 1999 with support from the government of Ontario through the Trillium Foundation, the Rotary Club of Mississauga West and the United Way of Peel, and has proven the viability and success of community mediation; and

"Whereas the city of Mississauga and the town of Caledon have endorsed the Peel Community Mediation Service, and law enforcement bodies refer many cases to the Peel Community Mediation Service as an alternative to a court dispute; and

"Whereas court facilities and court time are both scarce and expensive, the cost of community mediation is very small and the extra expense incurred for lack of community mediation in Peel region would be much greater than the small annual cost of funding community mediation;

"Be it therefore resolved that the government of Ontario, through the Ministry of the Attorney General, support and fund the ongoing service delivery of the Peel Community Mediation Service through Inter-Cultural Neighbourhood Social Services."

I agree with the petitioners and affix my signature on the petition and ask Zachery to take it.

### LONG-TERM CARE

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman (Oxford):** I have here a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"We, the undersigned, who are members of family councils, residents' councils and/or supporters of long-term care in Ontario, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to increase operating funding to long-term-care homes by \$306.6 million, which will allow the hiring of more staff to provide an additional 20 minutes of care per resident per day over the next two years (2006 and 2007)."

I got it from a long-term-care facility in the great village of Tavistock, and I will affix my signature as I agree with it.

### HOME CARE

**Ms. Deborah Matthews (London North Centre):** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas access to home care for seniors and persons with disabilities allows them greater independence within their own homes and the ability to limit the amount of time that they are forced to stay in hospitals and/or long-term-care facilities; and

"Whereas doctors, nurses and health care workers need to be recognized and supported for the outstanding work they do within their communities, which must translate into increased funding and resources for their efforts; and

"Whereas implementing the Caplan review will contribute to a more stringent set of guidelines for ensuring that home care and community support services are more effective and far-reaching;

"We, the undersigned, respectfully petition the Parliament of Ontario as follows:

"That the Liberal government's commitment to contribute \$117.8 million to improve home care and implement the Caplan review be supported by all members of the House."

I'm giving this to Monika, and I will attach my signature to it.

### ORGAN DONATION

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman (Oxford):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas 1,920 Ontarians are currently on a waiting list for an organ transplant; and

"Whereas the number of Ontarians waiting for an organ transplant has virtually doubled since 1994; and

"Whereas hundreds die every year waiting for an organ transplant; and

"Whereas greater public education and awareness will increase the number of people who sign their organ donor cards and increase the availability of organ transplants for Ontarians; and

"Whereas the private member's bill proposed by Oak Ridges MPP Frank Klees will require every resident 16 years of age and older to complete an organ donation question when applying for or renewing a driver's licence or provincial health card, thereby increasing public awareness of the importance of organ donation while respecting the right of every person to make a personal decision regarding the important issue of organ donation;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to pass Bill 67, the Organ and Tissue Donation Mandatory Declaration Act, 2006."

I'm pleased, on behalf of the constituents who have signed, to sign this petition in support of it



## EMPLOYMENT SUPPORTS

**Ms. Monique M. Smith (Nipissing):** The pages and I on this side of the House are delighted to have the opportunity to file this petition with the House.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas improving job retention rates has a positive effect on developing valuable work skills, confidence in one's abilities and creating a greater economic foundation for the province; and

"Whereas JobsNow allows workers access to valuable resources such as job-matching services, pre-employment supports and up to 18 months of job retention and follow-up services;

"We, the undersigned, respectfully petition the Parliament of Ontario as follows:

"That the JobsNow program continues to be supported by all members of the House; and that we work together to ensure that workers on social assistance find a meaningful and long-term solution to meeting their employment goals."

I have affixed my signature to this petition.

## LONG-TERM CARE

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman (Oxford):** I have another petition. It is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas long-term-care funding levels are too low to enable homes to provide the care and services our aging seniors and parents who are residents of long-term-care homes need, with the respect and dignity that they deserve; and

"Whereas, even with recent funding increases and a dedicated staff who do more than their best, there is still not enough time available to provide the care residents need. For example, 10 minutes, and sometimes less, is simply not enough time to assist a resident to get up, dressed, to the bathroom and then to the dining room for breakfast; and

"Whereas those unacceptable care and service levels are now at risk of declining;

"We, the undersigned, who are members of family councils, residents' councils and/or supporters of long-term care in Ontario, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to increase operating funding to long-term-care homes by \$306.6 million, which will allow the hiring of more staff to provide an additional 20 minutes of care per resident per day over the next two years (2006 and 2007)."

I received this from a great many of my constituents in the great town of Ingersoll. I will sign this petition, as I agree with it.

## HOME CARE

**Mr. Tony Ruprecht (Davenport):** I have a petition, which reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas access to home care for seniors and persons with disabilities allows them greater independence within their own homes and the ability to limit the amount of time that they are forced to stay in hospitals and/or long-term-care facilities; and

"Whereas doctors, nurses and health care workers need to be recognized and supported for the outstanding work they do within their communities, which must translate into increased funding and resources for their efforts; and

"Whereas implementing the Caplan review will contribute to a more stringent set of guidelines for ensuring that home care and community support services are more effective and far-reaching;

We, the undersigned, respectfully petition the Parliament of Ontario as follows:

"That the Liberal government's commitment to contribute \$117.8 million to improve home care and implement the Caplan review be supported by all members of the House."

Since I agree, I'm delighted to sign this petition.

1550

## LONG-TERM CARE

**Mr. Robert W. Runciman (Leeds-Grenville):** I have a petition from the good folks at Hilltop Manor in Merrickville.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas long-term-care funding levels are too low to enable homes to provide the care and services our aging seniors and parents who are residents of long-term-care homes need, with the respect and dignity that they deserve; and

"Whereas, even with recent funding increases and a dedicated staff who do more than their best, there is still not enough time available to provide the care residents need. For example, 10 minutes, and sometimes less, is simply not enough time to assist a resident to get up, dressed, to the bathroom and then to the dining room for breakfast; and

"Whereas those unacceptable care and service levels are now at risk of declining;

"We, the undersigned, who are members of family councils, residents' councils and/or supporters of long-term care in Ontario, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to increase operating funding to long-term-care homes by \$306.6 million, which will allow the hiring of more staff to provide an additional 20 minutes of care per resident per day over the next two years (2006 and 2007)."

I affix my signature in support.

## HOME CARE

**Mr. Jeff Leal (Peterborough):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas access to home care for seniors and persons with disabilities allows them greater independence within



their own homes and the ability to limit the amount of time that they are forced to stay in hospitals and/or long-term care facilities; and

"Whereas doctors, nurses and health care workers need to be recognized and supported for the outstanding work they do within their communities, which must translate into increased funding and resources for their efforts; and

"Whereas implementing the Caplan review will contribute to a more stringent set of guidelines for ensuring that home care and community support services are more effective and far-reaching;

"We, the unsigned, respectfully petition the Parliament of Ontario as follows:

"That the Liberal government's commitment to contribute \$117.8 million to improve home care and for the implementation of the Caplan review be supported by all members of the House."

I support this, and I will affix my signature to it.

#### SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

**Mr. Bill Murdoch (Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly, and it reads:

"Whereas, without appropriate support, people who have an intellectual disability are often unable to participate effectively in community life and are deprived of the benefits of society enjoyed by other citizens; and

"Whereas quality supports are dependent on the ability to attract and retain qualified workers; and

"Whereas the salaries of workers who provide community-based supports and services are up to 25% less than salaries paid to those doing the same work in government-operated services and other sectors;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, respectfully petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the government of Ontario address, as a priority, funding to community agencies in the developmental services sector to address critical underfunding of staff salaries and ensure that people who have an intellectual disability continue to receive quality supports and services that they require in order to live meaningful lives within their community."

I have also signed this.

#### OPPOSITION DAY

##### TOURISM

**Mr. Robert W. Runciman (Leeds-Grenville):** I move that the Legislative Assembly calls upon the government,

To recognize that the McGuinty Liberals have cut the Ministry of Tourism budget in both of their last two budgets by a total of \$46 million and cut this year's budget by \$25 million alone; and

To recognize that a strong Canadian dollar, increased border security, high gas prices and numerous anti-American statements made by prominent Liberals are just some of the many things that are currently hindering the tourism and hospitality industries in Ontario and despite all of these challenges, the McGuinty government has continually undertaken initiatives that further damage these sectors, such as the City of Toronto Act and greater regulation of Ontario's farmer markets; and

To recognize that besides criticizing the federal government, the McGuinty government has not taken any sort of meaningful action or demonstrated any kind of leadership in helping to solve current border issues with the United States or challenges facing the hospitality sector; and

To recognize that in 2005, US border crossings to Ontario reached their lowest level since 1972 and that this decline in US visitation is significant because, in 2004, Americans accounted for 18% of Ontario's total visitors and 26% of the province's visitors' spending; and

To recognize that the total number of person visits to Ontario has steadily declined under the McGuinty government and that, under their watch, these numbers have declined to levels not seen since the early and mid-1990s; and

To recognize that in January 2006, US entries to Ontario fell to their lowest level for the month in 12 years and that in January 2006, Ontario received 40% fewer entries from the US compared to January 2001, the historical peak for the month, and 27% fewer compared to January 2003, yet the McGuinty government has continued to cut the Ministry of Tourism budget and proceed with legislative and policy initiatives that further jeopardize the economic well-being of the hospitality sector. Addressed to the Premier of Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Mr. Runciman has moved opposition day number 2. The member for Leeds-Grenville? Further debate? The member for Niagara Centre.

**Mr. Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre):** Thank you very much for the accommodation by the official opposition, letting me take the floor in advance of their lead speaker. I'm pleased to co-operate here to ensure that in this very limited, very restricted period of time, all parties have an opportunity to address this.

I'm going to be quite blunt and upfront. New Democrats are going to be supporting this resolution. As we'll be supporting it and the members of the Conservative Party will be arguing for others to support it as well, I suspect that Liberal members of this chamber will be standing up in full defence mode. I would say to you that it is as much denial on their part as anything else.

Look, I come from down in Niagara. I'm blessed to have been able to represent the folks in Welland, Thorold, Pelham and south St. Catharines for a few years now. Those are healthy, strong communities. They're down there along the Niagara River in the Niagara region, and tourism is incredibly important to those communities.



I just canvassed an illustration of the sort of things that go on down there. As a matter of fact, Jim Bradley, the Minister of Tourism, and I have been this past weekend attending the kickoff events for the 38th annual Niagara Folk Arts Festival, primarily in St. Catharines but in municipalities beyond, Niagara-on-the-Lake included. This is a huge event for the folks in the region, for the ethnic communities and for the folk arts communities that organize it and open their doors to the public. It is a huge event for Mr. Bradley and myself in so many ways, because of course we don't decline the food or the occasional beverage that's offered to us. Mr. Bradley distinguished himself on Sunday past, dancing with young Ukrainian folk dancers. I'm sorry to tell you that Mr. Bradley is not Ukrainian, although he wishes he was, nor is he young, and I'm sure that after that effort on the stage on Sunday, he wishes he was young as well. He can sure keep a rhythm. That's an illustration of the sort of things that go on in small-town Ontario. Right here and now, it's going on all through to May 28, wrapping up at Montebello Park, the 38th annual Niagara Folk Arts Festival.

I want to mention a couple of others because I want to be fair to other parts of the region. Of course, there's the Welland Rose Festival. That's a premier event. It's rated as one of the top 50 festivals in Ontario. I've been so proud to have known those folks for an incredibly long time. It's the 45th annual Welland Rose Festival. Of course, at my age, I can remember the very first one. It's true. It's almost half a century now.

It's an event that not only does a great job of bringing the community together, people celebrating their community and its history, but also of attracting visitors. There are people who, as a tourism exercise—I'm one of them—increasingly enjoy visiting smaller-town North America, or Europe for that matter. Forget the big cities. Forget New York City or Chicago—not that there's anything wrong with them. Montreal is a great place. I think Montreal is a wonderful city and Ottawa is a wonderful city. But at the end of the day, it's visiting small-town, historic Ontario. I've travelled that route of Highway 6, one of Ontario's great roadways—it is, isn't it, Speaker?—all the way from Port Dover and the Erie Beach Hotel and perch, and all the way up through Manitoulin to Elliot Lake. It's a great highway. It's a historic highway.

1600

But when I've had occasion to be in your riding from time to time in the summertime or fall—and if you see the banner, the sign, up for the fall fair, for instance, don't speed up. Pull over and drop in. Seriously. Some of the most delightful experiences for people on modest road trips are to be found right here in our own backyard. But they're also a delightful attraction, and have been, for visitors from stateside and other provinces. I'm going to get to that in a few minutes.

I want to highlight again the Welland Rose Festival. That's June 1 to June 20. Just as an illustration, the 30th anniversary of the international luncheons is June 14 to

23 in Welland. Again, it's more eating. Whether it's the Slovak community, the Ukrainian community, the Chinese community or the African Canadian community, it's a chance to share in some of the home life, if you will, of those communities, and that takes place at the Market Square, a great market square.

In Thorold, the 28th annual arts and crafts show, July 15 to 16: I make my best effort not to miss that. It draws vendors. People drive for miles. You've got to get there early. There's no such thing as getting there late. It's like church bazaars. The church sales events are starting now. But these have great potential for attracting tourists who bring new money into the community. You're not recycling existing money.

Canal Days down in Port Colborne: Quite frankly, entrepreneurs, small business people, have done a tremendous job of investing along West Street, and Port Colborne has an incredibly successful event with Canal Days right along the canal. Private sailing ships and from time to time historical sailing ships will be brought down, the tall ships, a whole lot of volunteers, and it goes from morning through till late at night. It caters with a broad range of activities to a broad range of ages. I'm told there's a beer tent out there on at least one of the hot summer nights that Canal Days is operating. But I've got to tell you, this is small-town Ontario. In my view, small towns do it better. There is, as I recall, a beer tent on at least one of the hot summer nights that Canal Days is held. The environment is still maintained at a very family-appropriate sort of venue.

I know there could well be folks addressing the issue of tourism here in Toronto. I read in Toronto publications about the theatre strip, the restaurateurs suffering some significant revenue losses, and it's not just a matter of a restaurant being put at risk in terms of its future. It's a very precarious business. I also read about there being a high incidence of failure rate in that business. From the point of inception it's a high-risk business. But the jobs that it provides are important certainly to the people who work in them and to the economies of the local communities.

All I'm saying to you is that we are in serious trouble here in Ontario. I don't think it serves any of us well to underestimate the seriousness of the crisis we're in in terms of tourism. A few things obviously contribute to that crisis—the cost of gasoline. Ontarians even now, folks who live right here in Ontario, are increasingly less inclined to take what was considered the low-cost weekend day family outing of loading the kids into the station wagon, again driving out: "Let's go out and eat perch in Port Dover"; "Let's drive up to Sudbury and visit the Big Nickel mine site."

Those are the sorts of weekend trips that were commonplace at least down where I come from. We're not fancy people. We don't go out in those luxury ocean liners and stuff. This is what real folks, people who work hard for their money, at jobs where they're increasingly working harder for less and where their jobs are at risk, do on a weekend. This is what people do for summer



vacation. Nobody is jetting off with kids to Paris or places like that. They simply can't afford to. The Ontarians I know are far too frugal, struggling too much in light of increased electricity prices, increased natural gas prices and increased property taxes.

But the concern is that even these modest weekend trips, with the cost of gasoline, are going to be less frequent than they were in times gone by. What that means is that small mom-and-pop entrepreneurs, small restaurants and small amusement facilities are going to find it increasingly difficult to keep staff, and then they're going to lay those staff off. Those workers are going to be unemployed. They're not going to be buying things in their communities, because they're not going to be able to afford to, and then those businesses are being put at risk too.

I don't have to tell you about the inertia that can develop in a small town. You shut down one or two businesses in a small town, and it's like shutting down all of Yonge Street, because the impact on a small town is phenomenal. It's just like the communities where I come from, down in Niagara: You lose 100 jobs and the impact is immediate. The ripple effect is incredible—it's not ripples; it's like one of those huge tsunami waves.

So when small-town Ontario begins to get hit by the tourism drought, I see the impact as a significant multiple—in terms of that town, in terms of that community—of what it is in big-city Ontario where there's more of a cushion, where the balance of the community doesn't feel the shutdown of one, two, three, four or five restaurants quite as readily.

Gasoline price is a serious problem, and I encourage this government, whose members supported the NDP motion to have a standing committee look at means of investigating gasoline prices—I encourage this government, whose own members supported that resolution—to let that committee do that job. Because we can begin to address gasoline prices, we can begin to address at least one of the factors that's putting some serious restraints on motoring tourism—gasoline prices and the high Canadian dollar. While I don't begrudge any senior who's a snowbird their winters in Florida rather than tromping through the slush and the mush and sliding on the ice of February Ontario, and I acknowledge that the high Canadian dollar makes it easier for those folks to spend that extra month in Florida, at the same time, every penny increase in our dollar means yet more jobs lost. When you combine that—because it's manufacturing jobs; it's exporting—with the sky-high, ever-rising electricity prices, that's where you end up with figures like 110,000 manufacturing jobs lost in the last 13 months or so, places like down where I come from—Atlas Steel, still not back on its feet, or Ferranti-Packard.

Howard Hampton asked a question earlier today about why the province isn't requiring its municipal partners in public transit to purchase their rail cars for public transit from Bombardier, built in Thunder Bay, like the Liberal Jean Charest government of Quebec does in the context of the city of Montreal. It just boggles the mind. It's

public money. Keep those dollars here; keep those jobs here. Again, the high electricity prices combined with the high Canadian dollar have meant a significant loss in manufacturing jobs. What that does, again, is put all that much more pressure on other job sectors. That means if there's increased pressure down in Niagara for people to work in the casino, or in the hotel-motel industry—and God bless the security staff at Casino Niagara for having organized themselves into an effective collective bargaining unit. They're OPSEU members. I look forward to the day when the rest of casino staff can enjoy the same collective bargaining clout so that they can start to enjoy a little fairer share of the huge amount of wealth that's being taken from people's pockets in those casinos.

1610

Do you know what it means to work as cleaning staff at a hotel like one of the high-rise hotels in Toronto or down in Niagara? A whole lot of that work is done by women. A whole lot of them are new-Canadian immigrant women for whom the first language isn't English. They're put on quotas of cleaning, oh, a dozen rooms in a shift for minimum wage. The pressure is on to do the work faster and faster so they can get more rooms cleaned.

You talk to them, to these women and men, and you learn about the back injuries, because of course in a high-priced hotel you don't have the regular mattress, you've got the big double mattress—the big one. Those women have to flip those mattresses. They're scrubbing other people's crap from the toilets and from bathtubs, and they're doing work that a whole lot of folks would simply never take on. Inevitably, they're also raising kids and taking care of husbands too. So they've become increasingly dependent upon those jobs.

Mind you, if the NDP had its druthers, they'd be jobs with not just minimum wages but living wages. That's why you heard our member Michael Prue call upon this government today, in response to the most recent report on poverty, and talk about raising the minimum wage to \$9 an hour so at least it would be a wage that would enable full-time workers on minimum wage to live at the poverty level—not above it but at it.

We in Niagara, just like folks up in Sarnia or people in Windsor, I'm sure, are acutely aware of the border crossing. While I do not want to participate in any fearmongering around the so-called terrorist threat, the reality of 9/11 remains with us. It's undoubtedly burned in the memories of so many people, but especially those who had family members and friends die in those attacks, or those who participated in the rescue after those attacks, many of whom gave their lives as well. The American imposition of a passport requirement, effectively for people entering the United States—that means not just Canadians going to the States, because our concern should not necessarily be as much about Canadians going to the States. You see, that's part of the problem too. With the high Canadian dollar, more Canadians are going to be enticed to travel southbound—or in the case of Windsor, westbound—into the United States and enjoy tourist destinations there.



The concern we have in Niagara is that we need new dollars. We need the revenues that come from tourists. As you heard earlier today from John Tory's questioning, the United States has historically been the single source of tourism for Ontario. While Ontario may well be expanding other sources of tourism—and, please, that's only logical; there's nothing special about that. Just as Canadians, Ontarians included, are travelling to Europe and Asia and South America and Africa and all parts of the world more than they've ever done before in their lives, people from those places are travelling further and to a greater variety of places. The growing middle classes in India and China are creating whole new markets for Canadian tourism. And while the casinos of Ontario may well be a draw, an attraction—and the jobs are important—we know there has been a reduction in the amount of money being gamed, played in those casinos, and a reduction in the amount of new money being gamed in those casinos; in other words, local money that's being recycled.

Mr. Bradley and I had many an hour on our feet in this chamber expressing concern about casino gaming. Quite frankly, every concern that we expressed has ended up coming true, to no great pleasure on my part. The capacity of casinos like Niagara to suck the life out of locals who are attracted to the casino, and who develop serious gambling problems, is exactly what people predicted it would be.

Small service clubs like the Lions Club, those sorts of clubs—the Kinsmen Club, Kiwanis—can no longer have a raffle for a colour television. When you're living next door to Casino Niagara, people aren't going to buy raffle tickets for a colour television. People aren't going to buy raffle tickets for prizes of \$500 or \$200 or \$100.

The Trillium funds: Most of us participate with pleasure in the announcement of grants to any number of non-profits in our communities. The Trillium monies simply aren't adequate to make up for the monies lost by those service clubs—men's and women's and mixed, youth organizations—that historically contributed so much to the community and that the health care sector, amongst others, depended upon so much for their role.

New Democrats agree with the proposition that there have to be aggressive efforts to persuade our American neighbours to have a greater sense of openness, while maintaining a sufficient level of security, when it comes to the Canada/US border. I've got to tell you, it's incredible that the American government is sending National Guard to the American-Mexican border. There are skeptics, critics, who suggest that even that won't stop the flow of Mexicans who are prepared to risk their lives—and do—to enter the United States.

The prospect of needing passports for entry into the United States is one that is going to have a serious impact on Americans travelling to Ontario. If they're the type of traveller who is prepared to invest their tourism dollar domestically within North America—again, Europe isn't an option. It's the motor trip that's going to be the trip of choice. As you know, there's been a whole lot of traffic across those bridges, hasn't there, Mr. Speaker?

It's going to aggravate an already serious problem. SARS was a serious blow, notwithstanding the silly efforts of Dennis Mills and the Rolling Stones. Come on, Dennis Mills's self-promotion didn't get him re-elected. I make note that, as I told folks at the time, Walter Ostanek from down in St. Catharines has won more Emmys than the Rolling Stones, he has—are Emmys the music award?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Grammys.

**Mr. Kormos:** Grammys. My apologies. But Walter Ostanek has won more Grammys than the Rolling Stones ever have. He's the polka king of North America, and he would have put on a concert here in Toronto for free, but nobody asked Walter Ostanek.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Kormos:** Well, they didn't. Dennis Mills, he's got to self-promote—and for the life of me I'd far sooner have a picture of Walter Ostanek and me on a campaign brochure than Keith Richards. Think about it. He's not exactly a confidence-inspiring vote-getter. He hasn't aged either gracefully or well. But no, Dennis Mills opted for Keith Richards instead of Walter Ostanek. He found himself unemployed, and Toronto still hasn't recovered from the SARS crisis.

That is why those of us on the justice committee are somewhat concerned about Bill 56, the emergency management bill, which observer after observer—whether it's members of ONA, the Ontario Nurses' Association, health workers, front-line health professionals who are members of OPSEU, the Ontario Public Service Employees Union, whether it's people in the emergency management leadership role at the municipal level, we are hard-pressed, as Garfield Dunlop noted at the last committee meeting where we heard from the public, to find supporters for Bill 56. The government is marketing it as the creation of this emergency management czar, Czar Fantino, who is not an inconsiderable person by any means, collecting a couple of very rich pensions and receiving a substantial salary for his role as emergency management czar.

**1620**

But the thrust of the bill is what will be the new section 7.0.2, this list of extraordinary powers that can be delegated, in terms of them being declared, to a civilian employee of the government—not to an officer of the assembly, not to somebody answerable to the Legislative Assembly, but to an employee of the government. Especially when you contrast it to the Roy McMurtry observations in his white paper following the Mississauga train derailment, and while I do not want to speak for Justice McMurtry, the message I read in his white paper with respect to codifying extraordinary powers in an emergency response context is to be very careful about what you wish for.

Judge McMurtry, then justice minister in the provincial government, took care to note that the common law had provided, and in his view would continue to provide, for all the powers that are necessary in the course of responding to an emergency. The concern not only of



him but of some others was that when you codify it, you may well end up finding yourself restricting the powers to those who have been codified, rather than maintaining the common law powers. That will be something for further discussion and debate in the course of Bill 56.

I should tell you that my colleague the member for Timmins-James Bay may well have left to go home, which is why I'm not going to save any of the time for him. I know it's only Tuesday, but I have a note that he may not find himself back here before 6 o'clock.

**Hon. James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, Government House Leader):** It's a big riding.

**Mr. Kormos:** It's a big riding. He could be fogged in at the Timmins airport. It's happened before, usually on a Monday morning. Sometimes that fog doesn't lift for days. But were he here, my colleague from Timmins-James Bay would express concern in his own right about the tourism industry, as it exists in what he would call the "real north," where you can put a blackfly on a spit and barbecue it.

**Mr. John Yakabuski (Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke):** They're bigger than crows.

**Mr. Kormos:** Bigger than crows? You can make a meal for a family of eight out of one. They're big blackflies, but that doesn't stop the tourists who enjoy that sort of thing. You simply have to avoid blackfly season, right? It's as simple as that.

**Hon. Mr. Bradley:** They're gone by June, anyway.

**Mr. Kormos:** Exactly. You simply have to avoid blackfly season.

Border crossing is a significant problem. New Democrats, of course, have enjoyed the little spat between the Liberals and the Conservatives.

**Hon. Mr. Bradley:** Get ready to hold our coats.

**Mr. Kormos:** Well, Mr. Bradley, yes. It's like the schoolyard many years ago, when a circle of kids would gather, chanting, "Beef! Beef! Beef!" because two young fellows were going to go at it. Mind you, in the context of today's Ontario, that's unspeakable, and I neither condone it nor do I encourage it.

**Mr. Yakabuski:** You're old enough to remember it.

**Mr. Kormos:** But I remember it. So yes, as Mr. Bradley says, New Democrats are ready to stand and hold your respective coats so that the two of you can go at it.

We are comforted not at all by the fact that the Liberals at Queen's Park—that Mr. McGuinty appears to be incapable of getting along with anybody. Think about it: Mr. Charest and him don't get along; Mr. Klein and him don't get along; it appears Mr. Campbell and him—even though Jean Charest is a Liberal, and Jean Charest is a true Liberal. You know why? Because he used to be a Tory. He was prepared to abandon his political values at the drop of a hat. That's a true Liberal. That's the real test, Mr. Tory: somebody who has no principles and will call themselves whatever they think it takes to win an election.

**Mr. Yakabuski:** That's a Liberal.

**Mr. Kormos:** That's a Liberal. That's why Bob Rae, for instance, is an ideal candidate for the leadership of the federal Liberal Party, a true Liberal, a person who is prepared to change his values at the drop of a hat, which implies that you may not have any, and who will say whatever he has to in order to get elected.

So here's Dalton McGuinty, the Liberal Premier of Ontario, who can't get along—I understand why he can't get along with Ralph Klein. Ralph Klein is a Tory. Ralph Klein is a western Tory; he's a Tory's Tory. But Dalton McGuinty can't get along with Liberal Jean Charest. He can't get along with Liberal Gord Campbell, whom Dalton McGuinty has emulated in so many policy areas—he has. Dalton McGuinty doesn't get along with Gord Campbell, even though he's adopting Gord Campbell's policy on abolishing, dismantling the Ontario Human Rights Commission. That's a British Columbia model that proved an absolute failure there. Dalton McGuinty is so enamoured with Campbell's policy that he adopts it here, notwithstanding its failure, but he still can't get along with him.

I don't know. I haven't seen any of the old report cards. Maybe there's a museum in Ottawa that has some of those old elementary school report cards. You know: "Does not play well with others"; "Does not co-operate"; "Doesn't socialize well." He certainly has demonstrated an inability to get along with Stephen Harper. Now, maybe Stephen Harper is just a prickly kind of guy.

**Hon. Mr. Bradley:** You're close.

**Mr. Kormos:** Mr. Bradley says—the comment was, "Maybe Mr. Harper is just a prickly kind of guy." Bradley responds, "You're close." Everybody gets the joke. John Tory is laughing. I, of course, respond to Bradley so that Hansard accurately describes and records the interjection.

**Hon. Mr. Bradley:** He's a very nice man.

**Mr. Kormos:** Mr. Bradley says.

**Hon. Mr. Bradley:** Mr. Harper is a very nice man.

**Mr. Kormos:** Mr. Bradley says. I am sure Mr. Bradley will be speaking to this motion in his own right, so he can clarify any ambiguity that he has generated so far about his perspective.

See, I don't know Mr. Harper. Maybe he is a prickly kind of guy, but surely Dalton McGuinty can rise above that. Surely there can be a level of professionalism.

It wasn't that long ago in the total scheme of things, in the scheme of our lives, that I remember a succession of governments constantly blaming the federal government for their failures. I remember it, oh so well. I remember the story about Mike Harris and his election in 1995, and how his predecessor had left three envelopes on the Premier's desk and numbered them 1, 2 and 3. When Mike Harris was brought into the office and his predecessor moved aside to let him take his chair, Mr. Harris said, "What are these three envelopes?" His predecessor, the now-defeated Premier, said, "You open envelope number 1 in the event of your first crisis, envelope number 2 in the event of your second crisis, and envelope number 3 in the event of your third serious crisis." Mike Harris, of



course, was newly elected, somewhat brash and cocky. "Crisis," he said, "there will never be a crisis." Lo and behold, there were crises amany.

**Hon. Mr. Bradley:** He created one in education.

**Mr. Kormos:** John Snobelen, yes, exercised the skill of creating crises.

The first crisis happened, and Mike Harris rushed to open envelope number 1. It said, "In response to a first crisis, blame the previous government," so he did. When the second crisis happened, Mr. Harris rushed and opened the second envelope. It said, "Blame the federal government," and he did. At the third crisis, Mike Harris realizes this is the last envelope, and he hurriedly and heatedly tears it open and unfolds the piece of paper, and this one said, "Prepare for defeat in the next election."

**Interjection:** No, it said, "Prepare three envelopes."

*Interjections.*

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**Mr. Kormos:** If you guys want to tell a joke, tell your joke on your time; don't cut into my time. Come on.

Mr. Milloy, the parliamentary voyeur, wants to stand on the sidelines and watch all the time, but he doesn't want to get into the fray. Roll your sleeves up, Mr. Milloy, mix it up a little bit in here with the rest of us, but don't try to get in Hansard on my time, even though I'm inclined to accommodate you once in a while. If you want Hansard coverage, if you want something to put in your householder, Mr. Milloy, you get up and debate the issues. You debate the bills that are produced in this House. You defend why you're going to be supporting Bill 56, which is going to open collective bargaining agreements for public sector workers. You explain, Mr. Milloy, why you're going to support that. You explain, Mr. Milloy, why you're going to support Bill 107, which is going to dismantle the Ontario Human Rights Commission and privatize the human rights process, human rights litigation, here in Ontario. If you want to get in Hansard, Mr. Milloy—

**The Acting Speaker:** I would like you to refer to the member by his riding name, please.

**Mr. Kormos:** Thank you kindly. I appreciate your intervention and your direction and guidance, and I value it.

If the member for Kitchener Centre, whose wife calls John and whose neighbours call Mr. Milloy, wants to get into Hansard, let him take his time during debate on Bill 107 and explain why he is going to vote to demolish and abolish the Ontario Human Rights Commission. Let him take his time during the debate on Bill 14 and explain to mediators why they're going to have to be regulated by the Law Society of Upper Canada, because his government introduced that oh, so broad definition of practising legal services. I give this kind advice to my Liberal colleague from Kitchener Centre, whose wife calls John and whose neighbours call Mr. Milloy: that you don't sneak your way into Hansard; you mix it up in here; you get on your feet and you debate.

New Democrats will be voting for this motion. We think it's an important observation, and we hope that

with sufficient courage on the part of government backbenchers, the motion passes and the net result will be a positive one, spurring this government to some real action when it comes to giving Mr. Bradley the tools he needs to promote tourism effectively here in Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr. Jim Brownell (Stormont-Dundas-Charlottenburgh):** It's indeed my pleasure to speak on this motion this afternoon. Certainly since my appointment as the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Tourism, my friend the Honourable Jim Bradley, who is here in the House this afternoon, I have had many opportunities to see first-hand the commitment of our government to tourism in the province. The McGuinty government's plan for the tourism sector is one that takes into account modern global realities, and we have to understand those global realities, while still preserving the integrity of our various cultural, historical and natural attractions in this province.

As I stand here and participate in this debate this afternoon, I would also like to echo similar comments made by the member for Niagara Centre when he was up on his feet talking about small-town Ontario, his interest in small-town Ontario and the tourism opportunities in small-town Ontario.

This weekend, as many in this province know, is the opening of Upper Canada Village for the 2006 tourist season, a great historic site in Ontario, a great tourism site. I will be back there to participate at the opening and throughout the season, bringing friends and relatives to the site.

As well, if you really want to talk about small-town Ontario, this Saturday in Dunvegan, Ontario, at the Glen-garry Pioneer Museum, we'll have the official opening of the first permanent welcoming and support centre at that museum site. The museum closes down in the fall and over the winter season sits there relatively dormant, but starting this year, they will have a permanent site. I'm very excited about going out to officially open the building, which is a heritage building, and to honour and laud those people who have worked so hard in restoring this building to the museum site. As well this Saturday—I don't know, I'll have to clone myself—I've also been invited to the launch of the 2006 Stormont Yacht Club opening, a yacht club that welcomes everybody from my community in to enjoy experiences out on Lake St. Lawrence, a lake that was basically man-made—a great facility. We have those great attractions all across Ontario. This is what I've been seeing.

In my opening remarks I talked about modern global realities. Chief among these external factors and global realities is the skyrocketing price of gas. This is a phenomenon affected by global supply and various international political concerns, not provincial policy. I'm not quite sure what the Leader of the Opposition is suggesting on this file. To keep the price of gas artificially low in Ontario through subsidies would quickly drain provincial coffers while doing nothing to promote conservation. We know in this province we have the



Minister of Energy, the Honourable Donna Cansfield, working so hard in this sector of energy, the conservation file. Even when she was a parliamentary assistant, she worked so hard. If that's the policy of the Leader of the Opposition and his thoughts, perhaps the current opposition leader has more in common with Mike Harris than we had previously thought, certainly in his thoughts on that file.

The other external issue is the high Canadian dollar. Again, in this issue the Tory stance isn't quite clear and indeed seems to change with whatever wind their party thinks is prevailing. While the Leader of the Opposition is criticizing the Premier for the rise in the dollar, he has previously said, and I quote: "The value of the dollar is set by the marketplace—so you don't hear me blaming Mr. McGuinty for that." End of quote. To the Leader of the Opposition I would say that what we hear you say depends entirely on what day of the week we hear you say it.

Another criticism from the esteemed member from Toronto Centre, but representing Dufferin–Peel–Wellington–Grey, is that this government is not working with our counterparts in the United States. Again, the rationale behind this argument is suspect. While the federal government has made no effort to work with the American government, accepting whatever they are told is inevitable, the McGuinty government has been working actively with our counterparts, both governors and senators, to find a real, plausible solution that will address security concerns without damaging the economies of either country. Our approach has received a great deal of support, south of the border, from both sides of the political spectrum. Ohio Governor Bob Taft, New York Democrat Senator Chuck Schumer, Alaska Republican Senator Ted Stevens, Minnesota Republican Senator Norm Coleman and others have expressed their disapproval of the western hemisphere travel initiative. Democratic New York Senator Hillary Clinton was recently in Massena, New York, right across the border from my riding of Stormont–Dundas–Charlottenburgh, to let the people on both sides of the great river that divides us know that she will continue to work against this ill-conceived plan.

While we do oppose the western hemisphere travel initiative, this government has an alternative. Ontario is advocating for a binational group that will identify and develop proposals for alternative forms of secure documentation, such as a new, more secure driver's licence. We will continue to work with our friends south of the border to find an alternative to the passport regulations which will still meet the identity documentation requirements of the initiative.

At the same time that we continue to work with our partners in the United States to address the western hemisphere travel initiative, this government also realizes that the face of tourist visitation to Canada is changing. I had an opportunity, when I retired in the year 2000 from teaching and became a member in this Legislature, to serve on the St. Lawrence Parks Commission, and I saw

the tourist trends to Upper Canada Village. Certainly I saw that international visits have risen dramatically, with overseas entries to Ontario increasing by 7.2% in 2005 over 2004, and by 11.3% in the first two months of this year, 2006. Countries like Mexico, China, South Korea and Australia are emerging as growth markets. While we continue our efforts in the United Kingdom, German and Japanese markets, we are aggressively pursuing these new opportunities as well.

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I am particularly pleased with the work being done to promote our connection with China. Currently, we are planning to bring the world's largest lantern festival outside of Asia to Toronto. We are partnering with the People's Republic of China right here in this province of Ontario. For 65 nights this summer, a sight not seen before on this side of the Greenwich line will draw tourists and visitors to this city and this province.

This is a government that looks to the future while dealing with the issues of the present. The targeting of emerging markets is proof of this. Further proof of this was present in the creation of the Ministry of Health Promotion, which is addressing the growing health concerns that are taxing our population. By transferring the sports and recreation capital program in 2006-07 to the Ministry of Health Promotion, this government has simultaneously removed added responsibilities from the Ministry of Tourism to allow for greater focus on the issues that matter in tourism, while placing the responsibility in a ministry that ties sports and recreation to health promotion, and that's the way it should be.

With one-time expenditures in 2005-06 for the cultural tourism marketing fund and support for Toronto's bid for the 2015 world Expo, and a one-time \$30-million capital expenditure commitment in 2005-06 to the Ottawa Congress Centre, we are strengthening Ontario's tourism infrastructure and getting the message out loud and clear that some of the world's most exciting destinations are right here in the province, right across this province, and certainly in my riding.

How the Leader of the Opposition can justify calling our government's initiatives of streamlining and strategic support a budget cut is beyond my comprehension and is anyone's guess. The evidence clearly demonstrates that this government has a plan and that it's working.

I am delighted to have had this opportunity this afternoon to make these remarks on this opposition day motion. I trust we will have further remarks from the members of my party.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate? I'm pleased to recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

**Mr. John Tory (Leader of the Opposition):** I'm delighted to be able to speak to this motion, delighted that we're having a chance to talk about this very important subject here today and delighted to have a chance to contribute a few words myself. Ordinarily I wouldn't have made any comments at all in the course of talking about this important tourism matter, except that the member for Stormont–Dundas–Charlottenburgh made various



comments that seemed to be unlike him in some respects. If he wants to give me some advice, I'll be happy to give him some, which is that he should stop reading that piffle prepared for him by the Premier's office, which takes gratuitous shots at people, and start to focus instead on addressing the question of jobs that are lost at Domtar in Cornwall, producing a hospital for the people in Cornwall, starting to get a new deal on the hydro dam for Cornwall, so that we can get the economy back on its feet down there, as opposed to addressing and reading this piffle from the Premier's office that he brought in here today. Never mind.

By the way, what started all this was his suggestion that I had blamed the Premier for the level of the Canadian dollar. I never have. What I do blame the Premier's office for is writing that piffle that the member for Stormont-Dundas-Charlottenburgh read, but also for the fact that precisely at the time when this province requires an investment and a reinvestment in its tourism industry, this government, led by the Premier and his co-conspirators, the Minister of Tourism and the Minister of Finance, has chosen to cut back. Times are different now. Times are difficult now. There's no question. That's true, and that's facing all industries—tourism and everything else.

Why are things different? Why is it we can't just count on the automatic number of visitors coming across the border as they did before, just pouring into Ontario? There is no question that there are some external circumstances—by that I mean external to the government of Ontario—that are contributing to this. There is no question that the high dollar has some impact on people's decision-making on these kinds of things—no question at all. There's no question that perceptions about the border and lineups and so forth and so on cause some people to think, "Well, maybe I just won't bother to do something that involves going across the border." So there's a limited amount we can do about those things here, as members of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario or as people involved with the government of Ontario. But there are other things that are contributing to this that we can do something about, in my view, and that really was part of the purpose of the questions we asked in question period today and this resolution put before the House.

There are perceptions that exist. I know this because I have had reviewed with me, as I'm sure the minister has, the research that has been done about Americans' attitudes towards Canada and visiting Canada. There are perceptions, largely fuelled by the activities, actions and statements of the previous Liberal government of Canada, that we don't want them here, that the Americans aren't our friends. You can't, on the one hand, stomp on somebody's feet and kick sand in their face and so on, and then say, "Come on up here and visit us and spend money here. We love you. We want your money. We want your visiting." Thank goodness that kind of thing has come to an end and we're going to work with the Americans. Sure, we'll have disagreements with them from time to time, but we're going to work with them

and treat them in the manner they should be treated, as people who are not perfect any more than we are, who we do have disagreements with from time to time, but who we also can work with as our best friends and our largest trading partners.

The second perception that exists—and again I've heard this from the research that's been done—is a "Been there, done that" sort of thing. "We've been to Canada before. We've been to Toronto before. We've been to Ontario before. We've seen what there is to see, so we're really not going to come back." That, again, is not true. There are lots of things to see and do here, lots of new things happening. I support completely the investments that have been made by the province and by the government of Canada; incidentally, investments that started under the government of Premier Mike Harris with respect to the art gallery and the museum and so forth. The vast bulk of that money came as a result of an initiative of a Progressive Conservative government. I support that, and that will help to get people here. But in and of itself it's not going to be enough; that is not going to be the answer that is going to get people here.

One of the things I learned when I was in business is that the last thing you should be doing at the time when business seems to be turning down a little bit is cutting the marketing budget, to say, "My goodness, things are spiralling down a bit. We'd better cut the marketing budget." That is exactly what has gone on here. I don't know specifically whether there's more or less being spent on marketing, but the overall budget that has been allocated by the people of Ontario in respect of tourism is down. The minister shakes his head. He got up and gave one of his "Here today, gone tomorrow" lessons in accounting, about how "This fund has been transferred over there, that fund has been cancelled, and we no longer do this but we've started to do that."

Look, the bottom line is—and I don't have the budget papers with me; I took them out to my office earlier on. Last year, going from memory, the number was \$261 million. This year, in your own papers, it's \$161 million, a difference of \$100 million. I will give you the benefit of the doubt in terms of the jiggery-pokery accounting you were doing in question period today. Fine, maybe a third of that actually has been allocated somewhere else or was one-time spending; it still means you've taken the budget down by \$70 million. Even if you'd taken it down by \$10 million, it's the wrong thing to do right now, because these people are struggling. The Americans are thinking of reasons they won't come here and they need us to be out there investing in better and more attractions, explaining to the Americans why they should come here, why this is a great place to visit, why there are 101 reasons they should be here in Canada, even if it's nothing more than that we do want them to come and we love them and we love their visits and we want them to be here as often as they possibly can.

The fact of the matter is as well that the trends all indicate they're just not coming. I was astounded at the fact that both the Premier and the minister basically



dismissed me and gave me, as the Leader of the Opposition—I don't mean this in a personal sense or a partisan sense, but they said, "This question that points to a sharp decline in the number of Americans crossing the border to visit Canada, our biggest category of visitors who spend by far the most amount of money at our tourist attractions and businesses"—they basically dismissed my question and started reading back old accounts of jiggery-pokery accounting and getting into all kinds of other issues.

At the end of the day, when you see trend lines happening like that in your business—and this is our business, attracting and succeeding in attracting people to come here and spend their money and time here—that is precisely the time when we should be investing in the tourist business, in new marketing programs, in new kinds of things, new attractions. It is something that is exactly the opposite of what we are doing. When you choose to do that, to make the cutback at the wrong time, precisely when you should be making the additional investment, it oftentimes sets off a spiral that's even worse than the one you started out with. Visits drop further, business gets even worse, people go out of business.

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Of course, it's not even as if the government itself somehow benefits by this so-called saving they're achieving by cutting back on investment in tourism. The fact of the matter is that one of the biggest losers out of all this is the government of Ontario. By the tourism federation's own numbers, it's an estimated billion dollars in business for the tourism operators; that's \$112 million in lost revenue for the government of Ontario. So how are we any further ahead? We are worse off.

The minister made a big point of saying, or the Premier or somebody, today in all that Premier's office piffle that was going on in question period, that I was big on—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Torgo:** It was you; it was the minister saying that I was one day in favour of spending and one day not.

**Hon. Mr. Bradley:** It's true.

**Mr. Torgo:** No, that's not true. I'll tell you what I am not in favour of. I am not in favour of you people cutting back on the budget of the Ministry of Tourism at the same time as you are wasting the taxpayers' money somewhere else. I gave an example today; I gave two, in fact. One was the \$160 million in scandalous mispending of the taxpayers' money that you've spent on hiring expensive new bureaucrats in fancy new offices for these LHINs that you're doing. The second example was the tens of millions of dollars—I think we have it up to \$40 million now—in ad contracts you've handed out to your Liberal friends.

**Hon. Mr. Bradley:** No, no.

**Mr. Torgo:** Absolutely you have. It is just bogus to even argue otherwise.

I'll give you a third one. If you had taken 2% of the \$3-billion windfall produced by the hard work of Ontario residents, who worked hard to produce \$3 billion in extra

revenue, if you'd taken 2% of that and allocated it to maintaining the level of investment, it would have still resulted in a cutback, but it would have been \$60 million that could have been out there saying to people, "Please come here. Please come to Ontario and see the attractions we have. We want your business. We want you to come." But no, no. You didn't even get 2% of that. You obviously went to the cabinet table and either didn't fight or you fought and lost. If you fought and lost, I respect you for trying, but for goodness' sake, it's your job to go and get that kind of investment in tourism in this province when you people had \$3 billion in extra revenue that you didn't expect last year.

My final comment is this: I think as well that if you would put aside for a moment the short term and how much we're spending this year and how much you've cut back by tens and tens of millions of dollars, whatever the correct number is, on promoting Ontario and encouraging people to come here, there's also a long-term problem here. I am told this by talking to the operators. It's one of the great advantages to being out of this place and talking and listening to people out there. They say that a lot of the small operations—you know, it was fine for you and the Premier today. All you really could talk about, when it was the good news, was the investments you've made to big cultural institutions here in Toronto. We support that. In fact, we started it. We made the initial investments. But there was no talk today, not a mention by you guys, of the small operators out there who, for years and years, have relied on American families coming up for their week booking, their two-week booking, coming up to the small lodges located somewhere in northern or central Ontario.

Those people are hurting. They're hurting because the Americans are deciding not to come here, the Americans are coming for less time, or in some cases the kids aren't as interested in coming as perhaps when their parents were bringing them earlier on. When you're cutting back on the investment, it means inevitably that, whatever your explaining is of your accounting and all the funds you've got here and there that have been located somewhere else for reasons best known and only known to you, you are not investing in the long-term plans. You're not investing in the answer to this question: What are we going to do to make sure those businesses remain viable down the road? What are we going to do with those small lodges that are seeing slowly declining business from the American market when they need to have that business to remain viable? The answer is: nothing. That's what you're doing: absolutely nothing. In fact, it's worse than nothing, because you're cutting back hugely on tens of millions of dollars in the spending of the ministry.

So what we've got in the short term is nothing: cutbacks from you, less money, less investment at precisely the time we need more. What we have in the long term: no long-term planning, just some talk about some of the institutions in Toronto, which will help a little bit, those things initiated by the Progressive Conservative government, with an add-on top-up from you in the last little



while. As far as the small operators in the province are concerned: out of sight, out of mind. They're not here; you don't look out the window and see them. They're people who are just out there trying to make a living, trying to keep up with your regulatory burden, your tax burden, your McGuinty health tax, all kinds of things that you're doing, your property tax fiasco and so forth.

**Hon. Mr. Bradley:** Our property tax fiasco?

**Mr. Tory:** Yeah, it's yours. You're the government of Ontario. You have the freedom to change it any day you want. You bring legislation in here on any other subject at the drop of a hat. Come in and make a statement tomorrow afternoon and tell us what you're going to do about it. You are the government of Ontario and you have been for two and a half years. You have the obligation and responsibility to change something if you think it's wrong. It's your mess because you're the government.

I'm glad we put this on the table today, because this is a huge industry full of hard-working entrepreneurs, people who work hard, families who work hard, people who want the Americans to come here, who love the Americans, who think the Americans are our best customers and our best friends, who want to get people from other countries to come as well, but who understand full well that the way to do it is not the way this government is doing it, by having no long-term plan and massive cutbacks in the investment and spending on tourism in this province. It is a complete repudiation of the proud record of accomplishment achieved by successive Progressive Conservative governments in the area of tourism and tourism attractions.

I think the government should be ashamed of itself on this account. The minister should be prepared to stand in his place tomorrow—we'll give him till tomorrow to pull a statement together—and say, "I repent. We're going to restore that spending. We're going to make the investment we need. We're going to build this industry back up. We're going to welcome the Americans to come to Ontario. Enough of this kind of scandalous ignorance of the tourism industry that I've been guilty of. I apologize, and we're going to do what we should do, do what we said we were going to do and get back to the good old days when we had a strong tourism industry in Ontario."

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Chudleigh):** Further debate?

**Mrs. Maria Van Bommel (Lambton-Kent-Middlesex):** I am pleased to be able to get up and debate this particular motion.

In my own riding I have a great deal of lakefront along Lake Huron. I have communities like Grand Bend and Port Franks; we have Forest and Kettle Point. In those communities we've had a lot of Americans who have come and have bought their summer homes there. They continue to come across the border, come and visit and spend their dollars in my riding. There's never been any concern. We certainly are happy to have them there. We welcome them in every way we can.

One of the things I noticed, though, that kind of caught my attention, and I guess that's because of my own background in farming and having a rural constituency, is the mention in the motion about farmers' markets. In my riding we have a number of them. They certainly do attract our American visitors, but even more so they attract Ontarians. They attract the local people. I think a lot of our tourism should be made at home. There's no reason why we can't encourage tourism from within and have Ontarians travel within our province to see other parts of the province.

We talk about farmers' markets, and as I said, I have a lot of farmers' markets in my riding. They are particularly attractive to anyone who has gone through. You get to listen to the noises and see the products that are presented there, and these are all done by local farmers. They're very social events. A farmers' market is not just an economic event, it's a very social event, and many people take the opportunity to just enjoy their community. The tourism: The opportunity comes to visit and meet with others who have come from outside the area to enjoy our communities.

There is also mention of regulation. I noticed that during the question period we had mention of regulation of farmers' markets. I think what we're referring to is the report that was presented to the Minister of Health from the Ontario Farmers' Markets Food Safety Working Group. That working group has brought forward a report. The working group is made up of representatives from the Ministry of Health, Farmers' Markets Ontario, the Association of Supervisors of Public Health Inspectors, the Canadian Institute of Public Health Inspectors and of course the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs representatives.

They have brought forward a report with recommendations on how to make food safety within farmers' markets more secure. Certainly food safety is a priority for the province of Ontario, but in terms of our rural communities, the viability of farmers' markets is very important to us too. As a farmer I can state very clearly that whenever we have situations where products are taken from farms, we want to make sure those products are safe for consumption. If there is ever an event that happens that were to threaten the safety of the public, it has an impact on all farmers. We do not want to see anything happen that would cause the consuming public ever to stay away from our markets.

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We have had situations where there have been concerns about certain products and we want to make sure they're there. But for the most part, I would say for the majority, farmers who work from these farm markets are very careful about their products and they set standards. They don't want to sell anything that they wouldn't serve to their own children, to their own families. They want to make sure the products are safe. That's why they have no problem in supporting some of these types of recommendations. They're waiting to see what will happen



when the Minister of Health decides what he's going to do with this particular report.

I want to quote from the Brantford Expositor. In the Expositor the president of the Brantford Farmers' Market Vendors' Association pointed out some things he had seen that were within the report: "What they (the authors) have done is try to relax the guidelines to help out farmers' markets and church groups." I don't see here that they're particularly concerned about what the report is saying. I think they understand what the intent of that report is, and very clearly the report says that the goal is "to preserve the sense of community in the neighbourhoods where markets are held by providing the opportunity for producers to sell safe, high-quality products directly to consumers."

I know that vendors want to do exactly that. They want to make sure that their reputation as farm market vendors is upheld and that they provide a high-quality product that will not just draw the local people and their local supporters but will also draw in all tourists who are interested in seeing what we provide in our communities, and we provide a variety of things. We have a number of things that I see in my own local markets: breads, jams and fresh vegetable products. We have an abattoir that sells inspected meats at the farmers' market. Everybody enjoys going there, looking at the products and discussing them with their neighbours and all the people who are standing about just looking at the vegetables, comparing what the weather is like and enjoying the day. It's a very common Saturday morning activity, and I know that tourists will continue to do that.

In my own riding, as I said, I have a number of American tourists who are invested in my community, who own summer homes in my community, who are going to continue to come back and invest in my community, spend their dollars there and take every opportunity they can to enjoy the water, the lakes, the farmers' markets, the playhouse at Grand Bend and the playhouse at Petrolia. There are a number of opportunities that we provide for tourists in our communities. I haven't seen anything that indicates to me we're seeing a reduction in the number of tourists in our area.

**Mr. Ted Arnott (Waterloo–Wellington):** Yesterday, as I was driving from my riding to Queen's Park, I stopped for a coffee just off the 401 in Mississauga. At the service centre where I often stop, there is a tourism information rack filled with brochures that promote Ontario's tourism destinations. I picked up the brochure that was recently published by Northumberland Tourism. I hope the minister has seen it.

My wife and I had spent a very enjoyable getaway on Rice Lake in Northumberland county a few years ago, and I thought it would be interesting to find out what was new in Northumberland's scenic communities such as Cobourg, Port Hope, Colborne and Brighton. What I found was one of the most attractive tourist brochures I've ever seen: inviting, filled with colour, making you want to pick up the phone or get on the Net and book your holiday right away. I'm pleased that the member

from Northumberland is in the House to confirm that. Whether it is to experience the wilderness and outdoors, arts and entertainment, heritage and culture, shopping and cuisine, relaxing accommodations, a spa and wellness experience or a festival, Northumberland county has it all.

I begin my speech on this afternoon's motion on Ontario's tourism industry in this way, as a reminder to all of us that our province is blessed with an extraordinary array of tourist attractions, and we've only just begun to scratch the surface of our tourism potential. Northumberland county is but one example.

After John Tory was elected leader of our party in September 2004, I was pleased to be asked which critic portfolio I'd be interested in being assigned. My answer was immediate and certain. I asked to be appointed critic for tourism and recreation. It was my hope to play a constructive role, enhancing the profile of the concerns and issues facing Ontario's tourism industry.

Even though we disagree on many issues and our political philosophies differ greatly, I have a high personal regard for the member for St. Catharines, who serves as this government's tourism minister. I would never question his commitment to his constituents, and his 29 years of service in this Legislature clearly attest to the support he has received in his riding through the years. So while I know the minister is committed to his responsibilities, as his critic I am obligated to bring forward my concerns about the government's tourism policy, where they're not doing enough and where they must improve.

This motion stands in the name of our House leader, the member for Leeds–Grenville, and I want to thank him for suggesting that we devote one of our opposition days to the challenges that are being faced by our tourism and hospitality businesses today. I know how important tourism is to his riding, and I appreciate his support of perhaps thousands of his constituents whose livelihoods depend on a successful summer tourist season.

Waterloo–Wellington, the riding in which I live and am privileged to represent in this Legislature, is no different. I think of Elora in Centre Wellington township, St. Jacobs in Woolwich township and Drayton in Mapleton township, all of which have packaged their local attributes into strong tourism-based economies.

I think of our festivals, like the Fergus Scottish Festival and Highland Games; the Fergus Truck Show, North America's largest truck show; the Reminiscence Festival in Fergus, celebrating the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s; the Elora Festival, the finest summer music festival in Ontario; Drayton Entertainment, with their theatre stages in Drayton and St. Jacobs in Waterloo–Wellington, as well as the Huron Country Playhouse in Grand Bend and the King's Wharf Theatre in Penetanguishene; the St. Jacobs country farmers' markets, the Waterloo County and Area Quilt Festival; the Elmira Maple Syrup Festival, the Wellesley Apple Butter and Cheese Festival; the scenic areas around the Grand River; our many public and private campgrounds; our fine golf courses; snowmobiling in the wintertime; the Wellington



County Museum, Doon Heritage Crossroads; our fall fairs; and of course Kitchener-Waterloo Oktoberfest.

These are among the major attractions in the Waterloo-Wellington area that allow us to host hundreds of thousands of visitors every year. I want to express my appreciation to the hundreds of volunteers in Waterloo-Wellington who work so hard to promote our communities through these festivals and attractions. There is no way that any of these events could be successful without the involvement of so many community-minded residents who volunteer their time to put their communities on the map.

I'm certain that all MPPs in this House feel the same way about their ridings and the need to strengthen tourism. We should all recognize and understand the challenges facing Ontario's tourism industry and how these challenges affect business people, employees, and communities across the province.

This resolution identifies the challenges. I would add that we need to acknowledge that Ontario tourism has unlimited potential for growth but is facing enormous immediate challenges, including the possible passport requirement at the Canada-US border; a stronger Canadian dollar that was alluded to earlier—almost 90 cents now; higher provincial taxes, including the government's new health tax; higher gasoline prices; higher hydro rates; and higher natural gas prices, among others.

On top of all these challenges, unfortunately, we can add indifference: indifference by the McGuinty Liberal government for all but ignoring tourism in the budget presented to this House in the spring of this year.

A few days after the budget, I raised the concerns of Ontario's tourism partners with the Premier himself during question period. They were expecting \$30 million in new money to be put forward to the Ontario Tourism Marketing Partnership Corp. and they were disappointed afterwards and wanted to know why the budget was not more supportive. The Premier ignored the substance of my question and rhymed off a number of capital investments the government expects to make in our cultural attractions—all of them in Toronto—many of which were announced by our government. These are all well and good, but they hardly attract tourists to eastern, northeastern and northwestern Ontario and other regions of the province that depend on tourism for their economic success.

There are quite a number of speakers in our caucus who wish to speak to this resolution, and I'm cognizant of the limited time, so I'm going to conclude my comments at this point.

I would ask all members of the government to show their support for Ontario's tourism and hospitality industries today by supporting this important motion that's being put forward by the official opposition.

1710

**Mr. John Milloy (Kitchener Centre):** It is a great privilege for me to join in this afternoon's debate. I am going to say right off the top that, having reviewed the opposition day motion, I plan to vote against it. I plan to

vote against it for a number of reasons, a number of parts of this motion that I disagree with. I want to focus on two today.

The first is that I think this Legislature, the members, should be standing in their place today and praising the exemplary—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Will the member take his seat. I would ask the members opposite to refrain from heckling the member for Kitchener Centre so as to allow him to make his points.

**Mr. Milloy:** I think members should be standing in the House today and talking about the exemplary and strong leadership role shown by the Minister of Tourism in this Legislature, one of the best, I think, in Ontario's history.

I come from an area where my colleague from Waterloo-Wellington—you may have heard his speech—just spoke about all the attractions. I can say to members of this House that the support and co-operation from the Minister of Tourism—he was down at Oktoberfest last year and I think wowed them all in terms of the presentation there.

The second area I want to discuss today in terms of the motion is some of the outrageous and inaccurate statements that are raised about our government's leadership when it comes to certain border issues with the United States, particularly the western hemisphere travel initiative.

I am very proud to say that our Premier and our Minister of Tourism have shown unfailing leadership in lobbying against changes the United States is proposing that would affect border travel. They've been working closely with their counterparts in the United States, particularly those governors and senators from the northern United States, and have been showing the type of leadership that Ontarians expect.

Just to explain a little bit about this issue, I think there's some confusion out there that somehow the door has closed on this and that the United States has said that any American visiting our country must possess a passport in order to get back into their country. Actually what has happened is that The Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act has passed, and if I may quote, it says, "The Secretary of Homeland Security, in consultation with the Secretary of State, shall develop and implement a plan as expeditiously as possible to require a passport or other document, or combination of documents, deemed by the Secretary of Homeland Security to be sufficient to denote identity and citizenship, for all travel into the United States."

As you read that, you see "other document, or combination of documents," and you start to realize that there is some flexibility there. There are points to be raised. There are challenges to be put forward to the Americans to find a way so that they don't require simply a passport, that they will find other means to go forward.

I want to congratulate the Minister of Tourism and the Premier for the work they've been doing in trying to promote this.



I guess what I take issue with about the Tory motion today is it goes on and on to say we've done nothing on it except to criticize the federal government.

I don't think we've criticized the federal government. What we've done is we've recognized that in this federation, leadership in terms of foreign affairs comes from the federal government. We have asked the federal government to take some leadership in this area. The Minister of Tourism has repeatedly called for a federal, provincial and territorial meeting of ministers of tourism to see how we can co-operate together.

This is not an issue that is over. When you read that statement I just read into the record, you start to realize there is flexibility. When you read the list of prominent US politicians who are saying there is something unfair with what is being proposed about the allowance for mandatory passports, you start to realize that there's a window opening, that there's flexibility. What we have done is we've called on our partners in Ottawa to take leadership on this. It is their job to be in charge of foreign affairs. We as a province can make these representations, but at the end of the day we want to work with Ottawa, and we want to work with our partners in the northern States and see that this is defeated and that we come forward with an alternative.

With that, as I say, I plan to vote against this motion for a variety of reasons. But I think those are two clear ones, where it fails to take into account the reality of the leadership that has been shown by this government in the area of tourism.

**Mr. Norm Miller (Parry Sound–Muskoka):** It's my pleasure to join in this opposition day motion today on tourism. I only have a brief couple of minutes to speak, because we have a lot of members who are interested in speaking to this motion, so I won't be able to make all the points I want, but I would like to start by saying that I've been involved in the tourism business for the past 30 years. I have had real first-hand experience and I can tell you that in the last number of years, the tourism sector has faced some real challenges. When you look at the number of visitors from the United States, in 1998 we had 30,168 visitors in Ontario; in 2004, 21,391. That's a huge decline in the number of visitors to this province. I can also tell you from first-hand experience that operators are facing increased regulation and increased costs, and it's making it much more challenging to survive and to make money in this business.

This is not the time, as John Tory stated, when the government should be cutting back on marketing. In fact, it's a time when the government should be investing in more marketing. Marketing in the tourism sector should be viewed not as an expense but as an investment, something that's necessary to stimulate more business, to bring prosperity to all of Ontario. It is unfortunate that the government is cutting back at this time, when the tourism sector is facing some real challenges.

I would like to hit on one other point in the brief time I have available to speak, and that is a quality assurance system. The McGuinty government promised that they

would conduct a feasibility study on implementing a standardized grading system for Ontario, so that consumers and businesses who want to do business in Ontario will be assured about the quality of the product and the experience they will have here in the province. That's something that hasn't been implemented. This summer, my wife and I are planning our first-ever summer holiday in Newfoundland, and there they have a grading system that makes it easy to pick out quality accommodations, together with their map and guidebook system, which I'd say Ontario could learn from. I know that the tourism sector needs a quality assurance system for the province. It would be a real benefit to Ontario's tourism business. I hope the Minister of Tourism, who is sitting opposite, is listening and is going to implement a quality assurance system in Ontario.

**Mr. Yakabuski:** It certainly is my pleasure as well to join this debate today, not just to debate but to support this opposition motion this afternoon.

It has become abundantly clear—the evidence is obvious—that our tourism industry is under great duress as a result of smaller numbers of Americans visiting. I guess the question is why. While we can't lay all of the blame on the provincial government, we certainly have to recognize that they must accept some of the blame. They are in charge. In fact, when you are the government, that's your job: to promote the tourism industry in this province. There is some serious question as to whether they have been adequate at doing that. This motion is designed to address exactly that, because this government has failed to address the tourism issue in this province and has failed to properly support it.

It seems like Ontario is embarking on an isolationist policy, not only within the country but internationally as well. It wants to pick a fight with everybody out there. Believe me, those kinds of attitudes come back and haunt you when it comes to the citizens of those jurisdictions making their rightful choice about where they are going to spend their tourism dollars. We've got some of the most beautiful tourism attractions in the entire world right here in Ontario, some of them right in my riding of Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, but we've got to be able to get the people there. It is the job of this government to support us in doing just that, and that is what it is not doing.

1720

I'm hoping that a light goes on over there, that there is some kind of epiphany and they recognize they must take seriously their responsibility to promote tourism in this province so we can all prosper. And they have to address the other issues surrounding tourism. Getting up to areas like my riding—they've got to address the infrastructure situation with regard to highways and all those kinds of things so people can get around. They've got to recognize the challenges that people are now facing with regard to gas prices and all those kinds of things. You have to have a tourism strategy that, in spite of all the difficulties, will attract people to this jurisdiction. We're looking forward to something better than we've seen from this government so far.



**Ms. Laurie Scott (Haliburton–Victoria–Brock):** It's a pleasure to rise today to speak to our opposition day motion to try to get the McGuinty Liberal government to listen to the fact that we need assistance in Ontario to promote our tourist destinations. The minister is here today, and I'm happy to see that. We need to listen to what has gone on. A \$100-million cut in the budget for tourism: Is that putting the shingle out to say to the US, "Come to Ontario"?

**Mr. Yakabuski:** It's not much of a welcome mat, eh?

**Ms. Scott:** No. It's not promoting our areas.

I'm very fortunate to represent the riding of Haliburton–Victoria–Brock, where we have an abundant supply of lakes and tourist destinations; farmers' markets have been mentioned a lot today; museums and art galleries; or you can snowmobile, you can hike, you can bike, you can ATV; there are provincial parks; all our agricultural fairs. The list goes on and on. We have a lot to be proud of and a lot to market, and we need to send that message. The Ontario government has this role, but they're failing to live up to the commitment of promoting the province of Ontario and the destinations we have to our American friends to get more visitors.

In the city of Kawartha Lakes, which has done some studies, their amount of visitors and tourism has dropped by 12% from 2001 to 2004. That's an indication from a smaller area of Ontario, and we've seen it in the numbers that have been cited today: a decrease in the number of Americans coming over to visit to do the things they used to. I remember seeing a lot of American licence plates up in my area for fishing, hunting etc., to name just a few. You don't see that any more at all. The government has a role in the promotion of Ontario and our tourist destinations.

I know it's a global world, an Internet world, and I want to bring up geocaching. Up in the Wilberforce and Harcourt area is the geocaching capital of Canada. That's where they can go online and find out about destinations, and hopefully they can come from other parts of the world. But this has been initiated on their own.

I know lots of members want to speak, and I'm told by my whip that I have to sit down now. The Ontario government has a role in promoting tourism. I hope the minister takes this motion seriously and that he proceeds with an influx of help for the tourism industry.

**Mr. Toby Barrett (Haldimand–Norfolk–Brant):** The McGuinty government's failures on tourism can be placed in two categories. First, we have failed policies that impact the entire province of Ontario: the health tax, the newly jacked up alcohol tax, the lack of leadership on border issues and the general lack of spending for the hospitality industry when money is allocated elsewhere; higher electricity bills and the price of gasoline come to mind. These are general policies that impact the province overall.

There is a second category, and this consists of the McGuinty government's failure to effectively react to immediate challenges that occur, developing events in specific areas; to wit, the McGuinty government's abso-

lute failure to deal with the routing of tourist traffic around the Caledonia area. I'm referring to provincial Highway 6, the Highway 6 bypass, as well as Argyle Street. This is Caledonia's main street, and it has been blocked to tourists and other travellers for a number of weeks now. In fact, this whole incident will soon be approaching three months. We have heard rumours of progress on this file, but as of yet, tourists have been taking a lengthy, convoluted and quite confusing detour, quite confusing even for local residents, to get around the area of Caledonia, to attempt to continue on down provincial Highway 6 to Lake Erie. I've certainly received the calls of distress—the e-mails, faxes, phone calls and messages of concern—as I visit businesses in the area, not only in Caledonia but farther down Highway 6 in Jarvis and Hagersville, and concern that I hear from the tourist hotspots along Lake Erie—Port Dover, of course. Port Dover's famous Lake Erie perch was mentioned earlier in the debate this afternoon.

**Mr. Kormos:** The Erie Beach Hotel.

**Mr. Barrett:** The Erie Beach Hotel. Communities like Turkey Point, a destination for not only day trippers but also cottagers and boaters.

The May 24 weekend is coming, and all of these communities need a big tourist weekend, especially given the dramatic loss of business sustained to date. For example, Mother's Day for many was a disaster from a business point of view. One letter my office received cites an 80% drop in business since the beginning of the dispute. I was in Caledonia last night. The pizza parlour is normally open quite late; it was closed. Other shops had closed early—the video stores and some of the convenience stores. Local merchants need this tourist business. The business is required throughout Haldimand–Norfolk–Brant. It's required at New Credit and Six Nations, communities that have a lot to offer.

I appeal to the Minister of Transportation and the Minister of Tourism to come down to the area and step up to the plate. People cannot just put up cardboard signs to direct tourists. There is one sign; I guess I will thank the Ministry of Transportation for a very large, lit-up sign. However, they have spelled the word "Caledonia" wrong on that sign. So I invite Premier McGuinty, Minister Ramsay, Minister Kwinter, Takhar if he's allowed, to make the trip. Come down to Caledonia this Friday. Observe tourists trying to navigate the blockades while they attempt to reach Ontario's famous south coast of tourism.

**Mr. Cameron Jackson (Burlington):** Tourism is very near and dear to my heart, as the current minister knows. In fact, when Premier Mike Harris phoned me and said, "I need you to be the tourism minister," I said, "Tourism?" and he said, "Cam, we've had 16 negative years in a row of growth for tourism. I need you to analyze this and do what you can to turn it around." My first question was, "Will I have a financial commitment from this government? Because this is a marketing portfolio." To which he replied that, yes, he wanted to look at service delivery—we went through about eight or nine items.



The two elements that I think are currently missing in the province are a real strategic plan from the new government and a financial commitment. I am sure the minister will say he has a plan, but if you aren't going to fund it, it's pretty hard to have a plan. So I want to put on the record the importance of making the commitment, especially now with the decline. Incidentally, not to toot my own horn, but I did achieve a 6.5% growth, which is the highest growth this province has received in 40 years. Since we haven't had an Olympics and we haven't had a World's Fair or one of those magnificent events—we have had a visit from the Vatican. But the three years that I had the privilege of being the minister were the three highest-growth years for tourism. As I say, it had nothing to do with Cam Jackson; it had to do with the financial commitment made by the government. And that extended to the cultural icons we have. The government has literally withdrawn its support from places like the Royal Botanical Gardens.

They are spending more money in Toronto, but Toronto is not necessarily the centre of the tourism universe of this province. We have the magnificent north, we have the eastern townships, we have Niagara, we have southwestern Ontario all contributing to making Ontario the most attractive place to visit in Canada.

1730

**Hon. Mr. Bradley:** I'm delighted to be able to speak this afternoon on the issue of tourism. I'm glad that a former minister is here who understands the file extremely well. I appreciate your remarks and your sincerity as the critic. It's a responsibility of the critic to draw to the attention of the government ideas that he believes would be beneficial to the field of tourism, and I want to say you're doing a good job as the critic in the field of tourism.

I suspect that what really happened this afternoon, or has happened in the last couple of weeks, that would prompt this particular initiative on the part of the official opposition is an annoyance with the fact the government has been dealing with the passport issue and an extreme defence of the federal government in this regard. Indeed, that, in my view right now, is the most serious issue confronting the whole field of tourism; that is, the passport issue. That's not a view simply of the Ontario government; that's a view of people who reside all along the border. I suspect those in the southern United States will understand the impact that it could have there.

I recall reacting to some newspaper articles. I had just returned from China, where I was promoting in Beijing and Shanghai opportunities for people in China to begin visiting Ontario in great numbers. Indeed, we're starting to see that kind of improvement and increase in people visiting from the far east, in particular, China. I read, under CanWest Global, the following. It said, "The United States is determined to implement a border security plan that Canadians fear will damage tourism and trade, so Ottawa should appease the Americans by eliminating those outstanding security concerns, Prime Minister Harper says." The headline of it said, "No Point

in Fighting US Border ID Plan, Harper Says." Then I picked up the Globe and Mail and it said something very similar: "Canadians must bow to the inevitability of a new national identity card for cross-border travel and they risk paying an economic price if the deadlines for its implementation are missed, Prime Minister Stephen Harper warned yesterday." He went on to say, "What we've got to start to put emphasis on is how we're actually going to resolve this problem, because we're running out of time. It is an American law. I don't think there's any prospect of Congress changing the law."

All of that is, in fact, inaccurate. I know that within the Progressive Conservative caucus—and this can happen in any caucus—there's a division. There are those who actually believe that you should have to have a passport, I'm sure, on the other side, who are obsessed with security, and I understand that. But they actually believe we should have to have a passport to go into the United States and for Americans to come here and go back into the United States. I'm not one of those. Keep in mind that every one of the people who perpetrated that awful crime on the US had a passport. All those individuals on the airplane had a passport. A person who was going to be maliciously attacking the United States as we turned the century had a passport. He was caught by a border guard who was doing that person's job very well.

What it's really about, I think, is the thin skin, if I may put it that way—that's probably being a little inflammatory to say it, but my friend the Leader of the Opposition was inflammatory so I feel I can be equally inflammatory this afternoon—the thin skin of the government when there's a criticism of the Harper administration. In fact, I think there was genuine outrage—perhaps "astonishment" is even better—amongst people, Conservatives, Liberals, New Democrats and people with no affiliation, when they read the comments I just talked about from the Globe and Mail and from CanWest, that the Prime Minister was, in essence, saying at that time after the Cancun conference that we'd better get used to it, we'd better simply implement the law and we'd better do so quickly.

I thought that was a misread. I thought that because of all the work Ontario had done in this regard, we had and still have a very good chance of delaying and finding an alternative to the provisions that the present administration in the US has decided to place in regard to that law. In fact, there are people in Congress, Republicans and Democrats both, there are people at the municipal, the state and the national level, there are business people, and tourist organizations and trade organizations who are united with us. This is not a war between Canada and the United States. This is, if you will, a dispute between those who reside along the border or in the southern US and in other parts of Canada, who understand that people coming across that border should be able to do so as easily as possible while still maintaining the appropriate security that everybody seeks.

Ontario has been in the forefront of this battle. I was glad you asked me—I believe it was you, and if not, your



leader, who asked me the question this afternoon about the previous government in Ottawa. Indeed, in November last year, I did approach Mr. Emerson, who of course is now a member of the Conservative government, and asked that he convene a meeting of tourism ministers, because it really affects the entire country, so we could have a national strategy to deal with this. Well, nothing came of that. Obviously nothing is coming of it once again today. My fear has been that the federal government has simply thrown in the towel. They're engaging—and they're not the only ones; there are a few others—in what I call crackpot realism; that is, "This is inevitable, so we shouldn't fight it."

Tell that to Senator Ted Stevens, a Republican from Alaska; tell that to Senator Coleman, a Republican from Minnesota; tell that to Senator Collins, a Republican from Maine; or the two democratic Senators from New York; or Governor Taft of Ohio, a long-standing Republican name. Tell any of these individuals. Tell members of the US Congress who have constituencies that are along the border, tell tourist organizations, tell the chambers of commerce that that is the case, and they will simply not accept it. As late as last Friday, the Ministry of Tourism co-sponsored a conference of business people and tourist organizations in Niagara-on-the-Lake, imploring them once again to take action to convince members of Congress that there should be changes. First of all, there should be a delay in the legislation, and then a reasonable alternative.

These ideas are not simply emanating from Ontario; they're emanating from our American friends. When I talked to Governor Taft at some length, when he was here in Toronto, he was certainly in agreement with that. So I see this as being the major issue confronting tourism in Ontario.

I want to deal with a couple of issues that were mentioned in terms of taxation; the Leader of the Opposition talked about taxation. I remember questions being orchestrated by the opposition about how good the federal budget was. The leader of the official opposition, Mr. Tory, got up and asked questions about the potential application of a tax within the city of Toronto. What he forgot to mention was that the federal government said in its budget, on page 214, "As with tobacco products, the federal government taxes alcohol products both through a targeted excise" tax "and the broad-based GST."

"Budget 2006 proposes to increase alcohol excise duties...."

I didn't hear any mention of that. That's an actual tax that has been implemented that may well have a negative impact on the tourism business.

Here is what the Ontario government did through the Ministry of Finance:

"In recognition of the difficulties faced by the hospitality sector in responding to recent challenges, the government directed that charges applied to alcohol sold to licensees be changed effective January 16, 2006. We estimate these changes will provide about \$25 million in relief to Ontario's hospitality sector, which employs

more than 360,000 people and last year generated roughly \$8.3 billion in real output across the province. Our new policy is based on consultation with the industry, which has made a clear and compelling case for support for this important sector of our economy."

In response to that, we received a letter from the Ontario Restaurant Hotel and Motel Association. Here is what it said—I hope the Leader of the Opposition is aware of this:

"Dear Dwight:

"On behalf of the Ontario Restaurant Hotel and Motel Association of Ontario and the hospitality industry, I would like to express our appreciation to you, ministry staff and the provincial government in eliminating the gallonage fee on liquor licensees' purchases of beer, wine and spirits.

"The savings that operators will realize from the gallonage fee's elimination when purchasing their beer, wine and spirits will undoubtedly assist in sustaining the industry through these challenging economic times."

That is signed by Terry Mundell.

These are people who are saying, "Look, some of the actions you are taking outside, necessarily, the Ministry of Tourism are designed to advance the case of tourism in the province of Ontario."

The Leader of the Opposition perpetrates a myth that somehow there are vast cuts to the ministry. I've got to admit this to him: that were I sitting on that side, I'd be saying exactly the same thing, because I used to do that. I understand that. That's part of the opposition role. You never explain why these things are happening; you simply state it as a fact and everybody is convinced that somehow there's a major cut.

1740

What happened is, the ministry is divided up now. Remember, it used to be the Ministry of Tourism and Recreation. Now recreation has been halved and it's where it should be, with the Ministry of Health Promotion. Remember that some of that is trails policy and expenditures on trails policy. There are many expenditures within that ministry which enhance tourism. There was a funding program that went from—when was it? Some of the members on the other side may know—2003 to 2006 which was for tourism, recreation and culture. There were a number of capital projects. Well, the expenditures for them end in 2006 because they're wrapped up, and now we will be looking at new programs in co-operation with the federal government. So they're not going to show up in the books.

The Ottawa Congress Centre: We wanted to show faith in the Ottawa Congress Centre project by saying, "Here, we'll put our money on the line" because there was a lot of worry that the federal government might withdraw theirs, that the city might have second thoughts. So we said last year, "Let's put our \$30 million on the line." That's not going to show up in this year's budget either. So you can see that there are things that have happened.



There's a special program that was established by the previous government that I thought was good. It was called the tourism recovery program and it was in response to SARS, in fact. It was to be a one-year program and there was extensive funding for it. I insisted we do it for a second year because there seemed to be a residual effect, and we did have it for a second year.

What we're seeing is that marketing is approximately the same as it's been historically for tourism. That's the most important part of it. But as was mentioned, other ministries also have a role. One of the undertakings I gave to people in the tourism industry was to make sure that all parts of government were aware of tourism, would make expenditures or develop policies which would enhance tourism. Of course, the Ministry of Transportation does that through its transportation projects that are under way at the present time. They mention the culture expenditures on a number of cultural projects in Ontario that will bring people in.

We have partnered, under some criticism, with the Mirvish group in bringing *Lord of the Rings* to Ontario. Some people said, "Well, that's a difficult part, where you're providing a loan for them. Should you really be in that business?" We thought it important enough to bring people in Ontario that we should do that.

As I mentioned, I have been to China. There is now a direct flight from Beijing to Toronto and there's going to be one from Shanghai direct.

I want to go back to the issue of the passport. I've written two op-ed pieces, one some weeks ago and another very recently. They've appeared not only in Canadian papers but I think even more importantly in US papers. They really pointed out to our American friends what the consequences are. My fear is that people in the interior of the United States particularly who are not impacted immediately by this will not recognize, as the Americans along the border do, what the consequences could be for our American friends. One of the efforts we've made as a government is to reach out to our American friends in terms of marketing and joint ventures. We really have some good things happening along the border.

Today, the member for the Ottawa Valley made a statement that his leader wasn't happy with. I could see by the look on his face. Sometimes some people in other places, like the federal Parliament, make statements we don't like. We don't associate ourselves with those and it's a good thing that Bob Runciman and I, who put this together, are happy to accommodate our American friends, because we both represent border areas. I'm sure he knows in his area that the folks in the tourism business where he is want to partner with Americans just as we do in the Niagara Peninsula. Peter Kormos, the member for Niagara Centre, who spoke earlier, knows of the many organizations that partner along the border.

So the great thing we've got going on the passport issue is that we have allies on both sides. It is not a Canadian-American fight. Initially, as I say, I was very concerned with the stance the federal government had taken.

I think we're seeing some progress in that regard. I think Ambassador Wilson—by the way, a very good appointment, I thought, of Michael Wilson as ambassador in Washington—has spoken to Premier McGuinty on it and we're all working on this. I see the New England governors and eastern Premiers had a resolution this particular weekend. That's the kind of action we need, because, make no mistake about it, I know you have a lot of other issues on here and if I were the opposition, I'd be raising them too, but the number one issue we're confronting right now is a potentially disastrous impact if that legislation is allowed to be implemented as it is foreseen by the administration. I think we can overcome that. With the help of everybody in this House, I'm sure we can prevail.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Leeds—Grenville has the opportunity to reply.

**Mr. Runciman:** Representing the Thousand Islands and the Rideau Lakes, I could speak at length but I have very little time, less than two minutes. I want to focus on one issue which is part of the motion today, and that is farmers' markets.

A lot of us don't understand the impact that farmers' markets have on tourism. There was a column in the *Osprey* newspapers this past weekend: close to \$700 million in direct benefit to the province, close to \$2 billion in spinoff economic benefits from farmers' markets. And a big part of that is the attraction of tourists. Certainly, living in Brockville, I see people coming from New York state every Saturday to shop at the Brockville tourist market. The same happens in Kingston and, I suspect, Cornwall and other communities along the St. Lawrence. But what this Liberal government is doing is attacking farmers' markets. They're bringing in regulations which make no sense whatsoever. We had the Minister of Health, a representative of downtown Toronto, out in the hallway talking about how farmers should conduct farmers' markets. That is laughable. Sheela Basrur, the chief medical officer of health, was asked about this, and she could not cite one problem for 20 years with farmers' markets or church suppers or bake sales in the province of Ontario. But this government feels they have to solve a problem that isn't there.

Where we have a problem is in the regulated areas. We saw it in Toronto this past year in a very significant way. This is another indication—and we see it in SES polling, where this government is treating rural Ontario, small-town Ontario, badly. Even urban Ontarians recognize that. We have the minister from downtown Toronto telling us how we should operate farmers' markets in the rest of Ontario. We don't accept that from George Smitherman.

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker:** Minister of Health, come to order.

Time for the opposition motion has elapsed. Mr. Runciman has moved opposition day number 2. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?



All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 10-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1748 to 1758.*

**The Acting Speaker:** All those in favour of the motion will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

#### Ayes

Barrett, Toby	Kormos, Peter	Runciman, Robert W.
Bisson, Gilles	Marchese, Rosario	Scott, Laurie
Chudleigh, Ted	Martiniuk, Gerry	Sterling, Norman W.
Dunlop, Garfield	Miller, Norm	Tascona, Joseph N.
Hardeman, Ernie	Munro, Julia	Tory, John
Jackson, Cameron	Murdoch, Bill	Witmer, Elizabeth
Klees, Frank	Prue, Michael	Yakabuski, John

**The Acting Speaker:** All those opposed to the motion will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

#### Nays

Arthurs, Wayne	Leal, Jeff	Ramal, Khalil
Balkissoon, Bas	Levac, Dave	Ramsay, David
Bartolucci, Rick	Matthews, Deborah	Rinaldi, Lou
Bentley, Christopher	Mauro, Bill	Ruprecht, Tony
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	McMeekin, Ted	Sandals, Liz
Bradley, James J.	McNeely, Phil	Sergio, Mario
Brownell, Jim	Meilleur, Madeleine	Smith, Monique
Chambers, Mary Anne V.	Millroy, John	Smitherman, George
Cordiano, Joseph	Oraziotti, David	Sorbara, Gregory S.
Delaney, Bob	Patten, Richard	Van Bommel, Maria
Dombrowsky, Leona	Peters, Steve	Wilkinson, John
Duguid, Brad	Peterson, Tim	Wong, Tony C.
Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Phillips, Gerry	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Gerretsen, John	Pupatello, Sandra	Zimmer, David
Kular, Kuldip	Qaadri, Shafiq	
Kwinter, Monte	Racco, Mario G.	

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Claude L. DesRosiers):** The ayes are 21; the nays are 46.

**The Acting Speaker:** I declare the motion lost.

It being 6 o'clock, this House stands adjourned until later on this evening at 6:45.

*The House adjourned at 1801.*

*Evening meeting reported in volume B.*



# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Hon. / L'hon. James K. Bartleman

Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Michael A. Brown

Clerk / Greffier: Claude L. DesRosiers

Deputy Clerk / Sous-greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

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Bramalea-Gore-Malton- Springdale	Kular, Kuldip (L)	Hamilton Mountain	<b>Bountrogianni, Hon. / L'hon. Marie (L)</b> Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, minister responsible for democratic renewal / ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales, ministre responsable du Renouveau démocratique
Brampton Centre / Brampton-Centre	Jeffrey, Linda (L)	Hamilton West / Hamilton-Ouest	Marsales, Judy (L)
Brampton West-Mississauga / Brampton-Ouest-Mississauga	Dhillon, Vic (L)	Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington	<b>Dombrowsky, Hon. / L'hon. Leona (L)</b> Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Brant	Levac, Dave (L)	Huron-Bruce	Mitchell, Carol (L)
Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound	Murdoch, Bill (PC)	Kenora-Rainy River	Hampton, Howard (ND) Leader of the New Democratic Party / chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Burlington	Jackson, Cameron (PC)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les îles	<b>Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (L)</b> Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Cambridge	Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Milloy, John (L)
Chatham-Kent Essex	Hoy, Pat (L)	Kitchener-Waterloo	Witmer, Elizabeth (PC)
Davenport	Ruprecht, Tony (L)	Lambton-Kent-Middlesex	Van Bommel, Maria (L)
Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	<b>Caplan, Hon. / L'hon. David (L)</b> Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal, Deputy government House leader / ministre du Renouvellement de l'infrastructure publique, leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement t	Lanark-Carleton	Sterling, Norman W. (PC)
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Dufferin-Peel- Wellington-Grey	Tory, John (PC) Leader of the Opposition / chef de l'opposition	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Matthews, Deborah (L)
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Eglinton-Lawrence	<b>Colle, Hon. / L'hon. Mike (L)</b> Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / ministre des Affaires civiques et de l'Immigration	London-Fanshawe	Ramal, Khalil (L)
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Erie-Lincoln	Hudak, Tim (PC)	Mississauga Centre / Mississauga-Centre	<b>Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (L)</b> Minister of Transportation / ministre des Transports
Essex	<b>Crozier, Bruce (L)</b> Deputy Speaker, Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Vice-Président, Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative	Mississauga East / Mississauga-Est	Fonseca, Peter (L)
Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	<b>Cansfield, Hon. / L'hon. Donna H. (L)</b> Minister of Energy / ministre de l'Énergie	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Peterson, Tim (L)
Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	Qaadri, Shafiq (L)	Mississauga West / Mississauga-Ouest	Delaney, Bob (L)
Etobicoke-Lakeshore	<b>Broten, Hon. / L'hon. Laurel C. (L)</b> Minister of the Environment / ministre de l'Environnement	Nepean-Carleton	MacLeod, Lisa (PC)
Glengarry-Prescott-Russell	Lalonde, Jean-Marc (L)	Niagara Centre / Niagara-Centre	Kormos, Peter (ND)
Guelph-Wellington	Sandals, Liz (L)	Niagara Falls	Craiton, Kim (L)



Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti	Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti
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Northumberland	Rinaldi, Lou (L)	Stormont–Dundas– Charlottenburgh	Brownell, Jim (L)
Oak Ridges	Klees, Frank (PC)	Sudbury	<b>Bartolucci, Hon. / L'hon. Rick (L)</b> Minister of Northern Development and Mines / ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Oakville	Flynn, Kevin Daniel (L)		Racco, Mario G. (L)
Oshawa	Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Thornhill	Mauro, Bill (L)
Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	Patten, Richard (L)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	Gravelle, Michael (L)
Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	<b>McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (L)</b> Premier and President of the Executive Council, Minister of Research and Innovation / premier ministre et président du Conseil exécutif, ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior- Nord	
Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	<b>Watson, Hon. / L'hon. Jim (L)</b> Minister of Health Promotion / ministre de la Promotion de la santé	Timiskaming–Cochrane	<b>Ramsay, Hon. / L'hon. David (L)</b> Minister of Natural Resources, minister responsible for Aboriginal Affairs / ministre des Richesses naturelles, ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones
Ottawa–Orléans	McNeely, Phil (L)		Bisson, Gilles (ND)
Ottawa–Vanier	<b>Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (L)</b> Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for francophone affairs / ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires, ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins-Baie James	<b>Smitherman, Hon. / L'hon. George (L)</b> Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Oxford	Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Toronto Centre–Rosedale / Toronto-Centre–Rosedale	Tabuns, Peter (ND)
Parkdale–High Park	Kennedy, Gerard (L)	Toronto–Danforth	Marchese, Rosario (ND)
Parry Sound–Muskoka	Miller, Norm (PC)	Trinity–Spadina	Sorbara, Greg (L)
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Pickering–Ajax–Uxbridge	Arthurs, Wayne (L)		Zimmer, David (L)
Prince Edward–Hastings	Parsons, Ernie (L)	Whitby–Ajax	<b>Pupatello, Hon. / L'hon. Sandra (L)</b> Minister of Education, minister responsible for women's issues / ministre de l'Éducation, ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
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Sarnia–Lambton	<b>Di Cocco, Hon. / L'hon. Caroline (L)</b> Minister of Culture / ministre de la Culture	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	<b>Kwinter, Hon. / L'hon. Monte (L)</b> Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels
Sault Ste. Marie	Oraziotti, David (L)		Munro, Julia (PC)
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Scarborough East / Scarborough-Est	<b>Chambers, Hon. / L'hon. Mary Anne V. (L)</b> Minister of Children and Youth Services / ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse		Sergio, Mario (L)
Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	Berardinetti, Lorenzo (L)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Scarborough–Agincourt	<b>Phillips, Hon. / L'hon. Gerry (L)</b> Minister of Government Services / ministre des Services gouvernementaux	York North / York-Nord	
Scarborough–Rouge River	Balkissoon, Bas (L)	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	
Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	Dunlop, Garfield (PC)		
Simcoe–Grey	Wilson, Jim (PC)	York West / York-Ouest	
St. Catharines	<b>Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (L)</b> Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, Government House Leader / ministre du Tourisme, ministre délégué aux Affaires des personnes âgées, leader parlementaire du gouvernement		

A list arranged by members' surnames and including all responsibilities of each member appears in the first and last issues of each session and on the first Monday of each month.

Une liste alphabétique des noms des députés, comprenant toutes les responsabilités de chaque député, figure dans les premier et dernier numéros de chaque session et le premier lundi de chaque mois.



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No. 77B

N° 77B

ISSN 1180-2987

**Legislative Assembly  
of Ontario**

Second Session, 38<sup>th</sup> Parliament

**Assemblée législative  
de l'Ontario**

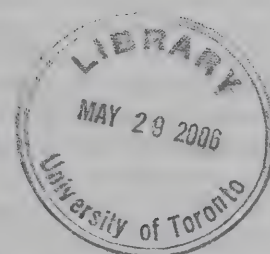
Deuxième session, 38<sup>e</sup> législature

**Official Report  
of Debates  
(Hansard)**

**Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)**

**Tuesday 16 May 2006**

**Mardi 16 mai 2006**



Speaker  
Honourable Michael A. Brown

Président  
L'honorable Michael A. Brown

Clerk  
Claude L. DesRosiers

Greffier  
Claude L. DesRosiers



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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 16 May 2006

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 16 mai 2006

*The House met at 1845.*

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### TIME ALLOCATION

**Hon. James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, Government House Leader):** I move that pursuant to standing order 46 and notwithstanding any other standing order or special order of the House relating to Bill 109, An Act to revise the law governing residential tenancies, when Bill 109 is next called as a government order, the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of the second reading stage of the bill without further debate or amendment, and at such time the bill shall be ordered referred to the standing committee on general government; and

That, in addition to its regularly scheduled meeting times, the standing committee on general government shall be authorized to meet at the call of the Chair on May 29, May 31, June 5, and June 7, 2006 for the purpose of conducting public hearings and clause-by-clause on the bill; and

That the deadline for filing amendments to the bill with the clerk of the committee shall be 12 noon on June 7, 2006. On that day, at not later than 5 p.m. those amendments which have not been moved shall be deemed to have been moved, and the Chair of the committee shall interrupt the proceedings and shall, without further debate or amendment, put every question necessary to dispose of all remaining sections of the bill and any amendments thereto. The committee shall be authorized to meet beyond the normal hour of adjournment until completion of clause-by-clause consideration. Any division required shall be deferred until all remaining questions have been put and taken in succession with one 20-minute waiting period allowed pursuant to standing order 127(a); and

That the committee shall report the bill to the House not later than Thursday, June 8, 2006. In the event that the committee fails to report the bill on that day, the bill shall be deemed to be passed by the committee and shall be deemed to be reported to and received by the House; and

That, upon receiving the report of the standing committee on general government, the Speaker shall put the question for adoption of the report forthwith, and at such time the bill shall be ordered for third reading, which order may be called on that same day; and

That, on the day the order for third reading for the bill is called, the time available for debate, up to 5:50 p.m. or 9:20 p.m., as the case may be, shall be apportioned equally among the recognized parties; and

That, when the time allotted for debate has expired, the Speaker shall interrupt the proceedings and put every question necessary to dispose of the third reading stage of the bill without further debate or amendment; and

That there shall be no deferral of any vote allowed pursuant to standing order 28(h); and

That, in the case of any division relating to any proceedings on the bill, the division bell shall be limited to 10 minutes.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Mr. Bradley has moved government notice of motion number 153. I look to the government House leader to lead off the debate.

**Hon. Mr. Bradley:** I want to start off by saying that I never enjoy these particular debates. I didn't enjoy them when I was in opposition and I don't particularly enjoy them when I'm in government. But we have a very heavy agenda. I remember in the old days, before any rule changes took place, the first, which I recall vividly, was I believe in 1993, when Mr. Dave Cooke was the House leader. I think that was the time—my friend from Brockville would be able to correct me if I'm wrong—that they started limiting the actual amount of time one could speak. I always felt that before we had that in the rules, we actually had more flexibility and bills probably moved more quickly through the Legislature. But we are stuck with the rules that we have at the present time, which have been amended by various governments. The last two times I can remember was the NDP in 1993, and the Conservative Party once or twice amended the rules. Each time, the government did it because, in the opinion of the government, legislation was being stalled unduly. The opposition never felt that was the case, I'm sure.

#### 1850

What we've tried to do when we put forward a time allocation motion is provide—first of all, I think we've had three days of debate on this bill so far. That is a normal time for a significant bill, and I consider this significant. And I usually try to gauge—this is intuition, because I can't necessarily always get the indication from the opposition House leaders whether or not the bill will proceed. May I say that the motion this evening is not in any way prompted, in my view, by the opposition House leaders. I consider both to be co-operative to the extent



that they can be and reasonable in the approach they take, defending of course the interests of their party.

So I'm not here tonight to denounce the opposition and say they've been constantly disruptive and taking too long in debate, because they haven't. They're just exercising their responsibilities as opposition members. It would be rare that you would hear me say that about the opposition, because I think members in the opposition benches wouldn't even have to do any of their own speeches. They could simply go and get one of my old speeches on time allocation and they would have a speech that would keep them going for some period of time.

Opposition members don't like time allocation, and shouldn't. By the way, I note that this afternoon, when there was a motion for sitting at night, neither of the opposition parties voted for the motion, and that is as I would be were I on that side of the House, because the opposition was knowledgeable of the fact that the government was going to be putting forward a time allocation motion this evening. It is certainly consistent of the opposition to be in opposition to that. I can't recall, let's put it that way, an opposition party voting for a time allocation motion. It may have happened; I just can't recall that ever being the case, because the opposition has a significant role to play in the House.

As I say, it is with regret on many occasions and with reluctance that a motion of this kind goes forward in my name this evening. There's been some good debate that has taken place on this bill. I might add I've heard members of the opposition and the government debate this bill and I think they've both put very good arguments. Some have expressed the view that they would hope there might be modifications made to the bill in committee. Experience over the years has been that in a majority government that doesn't happen as often as it does in a minority government setting, but it does happen from time to time. I think it's valuable for the government to hear from people during hearings. That's why we've made, I think, some significant provision for hearings. I'm not going to get into it. They always give us a list of "You did this, they did that" and things like that. I'm not going to get into that this evening other than to say, because I always have to remind my friend Rosario Marchese—I'm supposed to say "the member for Fort York," I still keep saying, but it's now Trinity-Spadina. My recollection was that there were no committee hearings for the social contract. He may be able to correct me on that but I'm not aware of that.

Anyway, we have a bill that I don't think is overly controversial. There are people who are going to be opposed to parts of it and some who will be enthusiastic about other parts, but it's a bill that tries to strike a balance. That's why we're unlikely to have people really vociferously opposing the bill, I anticipate, as we would, had it been pronounced on one side or the other. In other words, there's provision within this legislation for landlords who have legitimate complaints. I think the member for Leeds-Grenville or perhaps another member—oh, it

was the member for Simcoe. Mr. Dunlop had talked about a personal experience, having a rental property and some difficult circumstances where he couldn't get payment, and perhaps there was damage done to the house. I think we're all sympathetic to that. There's nobody here who's not sympathetic to those situations. On the other hand, there are situations where tenants face some great difficulty because of certain provisions of existing legislation, and we hope this legislation modifies that to a degree that those instances are relatively rare.

If one is totally and philosophically opposed to rent control, then one is not going to be in favour of this bill, or if one believes that there should be rent control that is without any flexibility, that person is going to be opposed to the bill. But I think on balance, and that's what we're trying to achieve, it will be there. I'm not debating the bill itself, though it has many good provisions in it. Others will be talking about those provisions.

There has been extensive consultation. May I mention that? I know one of the complaints of the opposition, and rightly so, was to get up and say, "You people indicated you were going to bring forward a bill in your first year." Well, the fact that there's been so much consultation between various people in this regard I think is an indication of the fact that the government has canvassed opinions from a variety of groups, organizations and individuals even before the bill was presented. If there had not been that, I think, again, the opposition would have a pretty compelling reason for being even more opposed to a motion of this kind. There has been comprehensive consultation with groups that would be most affected by the legislation, and those are the tenants and landlords.

We also consulted with housing experts to ensure that we took into account the current and future health of our rental housing market. The ministry undertook a comprehensive consultation process: approximately 1,200 phone inquiries, 5,000 completed questionnaires, 250 written submissions, and 10 town hall meetings in Toronto, Kitchener, London, Ottawa, Thunder Bay, Sudbury, Kingston and Hamilton.

I guess from my point of view, I'm not getting into the details of the legislation, except I do want to say it has been the subject of considerable consultation. As it finds itself in its present form, it manifests the opinions that have been expressed and the suggestions that have been made and the recommendations from a variety of people.

The motion is before us this evening. I would, of course, speak in favour of the motion, and I would love to see all members of the House support it. First of all, we've had a lot of debate on the bill at second reading, we have made ample provision, we believe, for hearings within committee, and we've also provided for third reading. I can remember in the early days in this House there was never a third reading. It was a rarity. But we made provision for third reading, so there's comment even after any legislation is amended and hearings have been held.



I look forward with anticipation to what my good friend the government House leader will have to say, what members of the opposition third party will have to say on this particular bill and, of course, what my own colleagues will say.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr. Robert W. Runciman (Leeds–Grenville):** I appreciate the opportunity to make a contribution—hopefully—to the debate on yet another time allocation motion brought in by the McGuinty Liberal government. There have been a rash of time allocation motions in the last couple of weeks. I think this is three in two weeks.

For those viewing who don't quite appreciate the terminology that we use around this place, time allocation is sort of a polite form of closure. What happens is that the government brings in a motion which sets out the time limits on debate and committee hearings and when votes will occur. Essentially, as I said, it's a polite form of closure.

It is somewhat perplexing, I think, especially with this particular piece of legislation. I don't think there's been any indication—and the government House leader indicated that—from us that we were going to be in any way, shape or form obstructive of this legislation in terms of the official opposition. We certainly think there are some flaws and weaknesses, but we think the current marketplace is working extremely well. We have the highest vacancy rates in memory in virtually every municipality across the province. So the need for this kind of initiative has been the primary focus of our commentary on it.

**1900**

I'm not quite sure what prompted this, and only the House leader and those who provide him with direction would know what the rationale is, but it does give us an opportunity to talk about a number of things that fit into the fact that the government is proceeding down this road. The government House leader mentioned in his comments that he used to be quite irate about time allocation motions when he was on the opposition benches. I certainly recall that. There were promises made by the Liberal Party, when they ran for office in 2003 and before and after that, where they indicated that there were going to be significant changes, that we weren't going to go down this road in terms of cutting off debate and that we were going to see meaningful democratic reform in this place.

Of course, that has not transpired. Quite the opposite: We see the heavy hand of the Premier, the Premier's office and the unelected advisers impacting on this place on a daily basis. Certainly I see it, recognize it and to some degree criticize it when it comes to small-town and rural Ontario, because essentially that's the kind of riding I've represented for all my career. We see things happening here that have a dramatic and negative impact on rural, small-town Ontario and no one on the government benches is speaking up. Perhaps they say something in caucus; I don't know. But I have to say that if they spoke with one voice, as a unified force—we're talking about 30 or 40 members representing rural, small-town Ontario

in the Liberal caucus—they could turn things around pretty quickly. They could change the positions of the ministers and the Premier's office, who are coming forward with these kinds of initiatives that do not benefit rural Ontario. They could change that very quickly, if they spoke with one voice and stopped worrying about promotion and aspiring to be a cabinet minister. Folks, it ain't going to happen. Between now and the election 16 or 17 months from now, maybe one of you might have the opportunity to go into cabinet. That shouldn't preclude the rest of you from speaking out and speaking up on behalf of the people who put you in this place. That's the sort thing I think we all aspire to.

I remember this conversation: Mr. Wilkinson from Perth–Middlesex was saying, "Okay, it's easy for you guys to say. What have you ever done?" It's nice to have the House leader here on the government side, because he recalls when I was a rookie backbencher here, when I disagreed very strongly with Premier Davis's decision to buy a significant interest in the Suncor oil company, and so I—

**Mr. John Yakabuski (Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke):** You weren't afraid to buck it.

**Mr. Runciman:** I won't say that I wasn't afraid; there was some trepidation. But in any event, I did, and on a number of other issues where I went very public and really generated the ire of some of my colleagues.

Mandatory metric: I don't mind mentioning that I was very much opposed to mandatory metric and I said so. I said to the Premier, "I don't think we should be going down this road." The concept of getting involved in metric was that we would be in lockstep with our major trading partner, the United States. That was the whole plan behind that initiative. We had the Liberal government of the day taking a small butcher in rural Ontario and charging him. They were going to fine him or send him to jail for continuing to use imperial measures. That was the attitude of the Liberal government of the day. I spoke out against that, again against the grain of the position of the provincial government at the time.

So for Mr. Wilkinson and others to say, "It's easy for you guys to say"—well, you can't toss that back at me. I have done it, and 25 years later, I'm still standing here to say that I've done it. For the most part, the people who put you in this place will respect you for taking those kind of stands. But I'm not going to hold my breath waiting. I've seen too much of this over the years.

I want to talk about a number of issues. We heard from the Liberal Party that they weren't going to be utilizing time allocation or closure on a regular basis. I call what we're seeing here tonight another broken promise. I think it's at least at 50, at last count, in terms of the 230-some promises made in the election platform. At last count, and this was perhaps a year ago, 50 of them were broken, the most prominent of course being, "I won't raise your taxes and, if I have to raise your taxes, I'll have a referendum." Of course we know that both of those promises were tossed out the window.



There are other elements to this. I think it boils down to the whole issue of not only integrity, sincerity and honesty, but I think clearly it boils down to leadership and respect for leadership, not just province-wide but on a national basis and within the Liberal Party itself. We saw a situation a weekend ago where the Minister of Health made some revelations about his past history, and the Premier was caught off guard by that. The Premier said he wasn't aware of it. I gather that he heard this from a reporter or from press reports. What struck me was the similarity between what happened with the former Minister of Finance, Mr. Sorbara, who knew—he was advised—that he was under investigation by the Ontario Securities Commission and failed to call the Premier and advise the Premier and his office, "I'm the Minister of Finance. The OSC has launched an investigation of me." That says something about the respect within the hierarchy of the Liberal Party and the Liberal government in terms of their leader, the current Premier of the province. I think it speaks volumes. We've never had any justification for any of those failures to fully inform and apprise your leader, your Premier, of what's happening in your life. Certainly if you're a minister of the crown, that has some impact on the reputation and credibility of the government. I think it also seriously damages, if you reflect upon it, the credibility of Premier McGuinty.

I think a lot of these initiatives that we're seeing in terms of time allocation here this evening—and I talk about broken promises—that have generated broken promises are the result of what I describe as a Toronto-centric government. The bulk of the cabinet are members from the Toronto area, and no apologies are made for that. We see the Premier is now, although if you look at the seating arrangement—I guess it doesn't indicate his riding, but he contends that he's still an MPP for Ottawa. We know he lives virtually full-time in Toronto and that the Liberal Party, through taxpayer-paid donations, bought him what I would describe and what most people would describe as a mansion in one of the classier neighbourhoods in the city of Toronto. That's where the Premier lives. He doesn't live in Ottawa anymore. He doesn't mix with people in Ottawa anymore. He has a limousine with a chauffeur and security driving him around. We heard at some point where he's paying \$65 or \$75 for haircuts. I pay \$7.50 in Brockville for a haircut. Maybe it looks like it, but I don't have as much hair as the Premier. Maybe that's the answer.

We heard a few weeks ago about the Premier going to Hamilton for a meeting or a fundraiser or whatever it was. He took a government plane so he could avoid gridlock. Instead of addressing gridlock and the problems that is causing for all the commuters and people who work in this region, he doesn't have to worry about that. He's now the Premier of the province. He can fly over that problem; he can fly over that particular problem.

It's a reflection of an issue that I raised in this House, I think it was last week, about this Liberal mentality of being "entitled to my entitlements," and it seems to have filtered down to the provincial level. We know that a lot

of the Chrétienites are now behind the curtains here. They escaped Ottawa when Mr. Martin came into office and they're now here pulling the strings.

**1910**

**Mr. Yakabuski:** Chrétienites—cretins.

**Mr. Runciman:** The cretins. The Chrétienites, we'll call them. I think that's a little more polite.

We saw people like David Dingwall. We saw the sponsorship scandal—millions and millions; the revelations today about them hiding millions and millions of dollars of overexpenditures on the gun registry. That's the Liberal mentality and that has now been transferred from Ottawa to Queen's Park.

We see it on a daily basis. We see it here with Mr. Kennedy, and both opposition parties have raised it: "I'm entitled to my entitlement." Last week—

**Mr. Yakabuski:** Oh, he made it in today.

**Mr. Runciman:** Yes, a cameo appearance.

I don't know if he was here for the vote, whether we had night sittings or not, but up to last week he had missed 53 consecutive votes, travelling across the country, publicly admitted he was moving to Quebec. Yet as of today he's still drawing a salary, all the perks, the benefits, 1,600 bucks a week or whatever he's being paid while he traipses across the country, campaigning for the leadership of a federal party. Unprecedented, but that is a Liberal mindset: "I'm entitled to this. The taxpayers can fund my leadership campaign when I'm in Vancouver, when I'm in Halifax or when I'm in Charlottetown." When he wasn't running for leadership and he was here, he never missed the votes—very rarely missed the votes. They can try and throw up red herrings but this is unprecedented. This man wants to convince members of the federal Liberal Party that he should be the Prime Minister of Canada.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina):** He's got to learn French.

**Mr. Runciman:** He's got to learn French for sure, but here he is conducting himself in this manner. What kind of message does this send out in terms of respect for taxpayers' dollars? There's lack of respect for taxpayers' dollars. He's not here. He's not voting here, he's travelling across the country, yet he feels he deserves to continue to receive \$1,600 a week from the taxpayers of Ontario.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker:** I can barely hear the member for Leeds-Grenville and I'd like to, since he has the floor. I'll return to the member for Leeds-Grenville.

**Mr. Runciman:** Mr. Speaker, I want to get back to the theme of this being a Toronto-centric government and why I think that has resulted in so many breaches of promises. This is one of them that we're debating here this evening, a time allocation motion, in fact a closure motion.

I'm looking for some direction in terms of how long I have to speak here. I'm looking at our whip.

**Mr. Norm Miller (Parry Sound-Muskoka):** As long as you want.

**Mr. Runciman:** As long as I want. Well, that's good to hear.



I want to touch again on the Toronto-centric nature of this government, the fact that they're consumed by retaining the seats they hold in Toronto and around the areas outside of Toronto. This is essentially their focus. They have abandoned rural Ontario. They've abandoned small-town Ontario, essentially. There was an SES poll that came out recently that said most Ontarians agree that you folks have abandoned rural Ontario. In fact, even urban Ontarians believe that you have abandoned rural Ontario. So you can't pull the wool over everybody's eyes. They understand what's happening, they appreciate what's happening and they don't respect what's happening. They want you to treat people across the province even-handedly, fairly, and that's not happening. Your focus is politics and doing whatever you have to do to retain a majority government, and to hell with the rest of the province which you have written off essentially.

A case in point, which really I think drives this point home—and hopefully some of my colleagues on the government benches are listening to this—is what this government is doing with respect to farmers' markets across the province. This was mentioned in our opposition day motion today on tourism, and I didn't get very much time. I had less than two minutes to talk about it. I wanted to talk about that element of farmers' markets and its impact on tourism. The direct impact in terms of its economic benefit to Ontario is close to \$700 million on an annualized basis. If you look at the spinoffs, the economic benefit to Ontario is around \$2 billion. They have a very significant impact on the economy of this province, and it is a tourism draw. I know that from my local experience in the city of Brockville. When we have a market two or three days a week in the summer, we have all kind of Americans coming across by boat to shop in that market. It's a magnet. And you could say that about communities throughout this province: They are magnets for tourists.

This government, in its lack of wisdom, in its Big Brother approach, in its Toronto-centric mentality, has decided to attack farmers' markets, has decided to attack potluck dinners, has decided to attack church dinners, bake sales. This is true. This is accurate.

**Mr. Phil McNeely (Ottawa-Orléans):** Sunday schools.

**Mr. Runciman:** Well, that'll be the next move by you guys.

Those of you who are viewing this, I want to point out that the Liberal backbenchers—they're not on camera—are laughing about this. They're laughing about this.

**Interjection:** We're laughing at you.

**Mr. Runciman:** They think this is funny. They're saying they're laughing at me because I'm raising concerns about rural Ontario and about their attack on the traditions and history of this province and rural, small-town Ontario. That's what they're laughing at. That's the contempt they have for the traditions of rural Ontario in this great province. They don't understand the traditions. They don't understand the traditions of church dinners. They don't understand the traditions of farmers' markets.

That's why they want to go in and control them. They want them to have logbooks. They want them to have food handler certificates.

A reporter asked the provincial medical officer of health today, "What are you doing this for? Have you had any complaints over the last 20 years?" She said, "We have not had one complaint in 20 years." Not one complaint. Where do we have the problems? They're in the regulated sector. In Toronto—Mr. Duguid would know this—we had a serious problem last year in one of the restaurants. We found out it was some product coming in from Asia which was causing the food problems. In Hamilton last year we had 130 or so people sick at a catered banquet, a licensed caterer. That's the kind of problems we're having. We're not having problems at church dinners. You're telling people who for generations—they're mothers, they're grandmothers, they're great grandmothers—used to make a pie, used to make a salad and take to it a potluck dinner to raise some money for the church or to have a church meeting, that they can't do that anymore.

**Hon. Leona Dombrowsky (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs):** Who signed regulation 170.

**Mr. Runciman:** There's the minister for rural affairs, who's—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker:** Take your seat, please.

I would ask the Minister of Agriculture and Food to refrain from heckling the member for Leeds-Grenville, who has the floor.

The member for Leeds-Grenville.

**Mr. Runciman:** Mr. Speaker, I'll calm down. It's the interjections from people who shouldn't be interjecting which get me upset, because these are people who are supposed to be standing up for rural Ontario. Maybe they do. But I would think that in situations like this, where the Minister of Health is out in the hallway today in a scrum—here's a guy who represents downtown Toronto, doesn't have a clue, wouldn't know a church dinner from Chuck E. Cheese. That's the reality, and here he is saying, "We can go into and impose these kinds of regulations on farmers' markets. We can go in and impose these kinds of regulations and enforcement, sending out these inspectors."

The Philipsville Women's Institute called me a couple of months ago because the Lanark-Leeds-Grenville health unit was threatening to shut them down. They have had these potluck dinners for the Women's Institute for probably 100 years. It's a main source of income for the Women's Institute. They have never had a problem. They have never had a complaint. But now the health unit is out there telling them, "You've got to have food handler certificates. You can't bring in potluck. You've got to have a licensed and authorized kitchen, and you've got to spend \$50,000 to install that kind of kitchen. You've got to keep logbooks of temperatures" when you're doing this, that and the other thing. There is a whole list of these things that are simply insane.



This is the minister, of course, who wanted to ban raw sushi. Of course, there was such an uproar, but where did that uproar come from? It came from, essentially, urban Toronto, Ontario, and when he got that uproar, he backed away. Now that he and his Toronto-centric friends are going into rural Ontario, they don't care about an uproar, an outcry in rural Ontario, because they've written it off. I've said it here before: They've written off at least 20 seats. That's the best-case scenario for them in the next election. The worst-case scenario is that they're going to lose 35 or 40 and lose government. That's the one I'm predicting.

**1920**

I'll tell you, he backs off on sushi because of the outcry in Toronto, but all of rural Ontario—and we're going to hear more and more of this. The Minister of Health stands up and says, "Oh, nothing's changed." The minister here says, "Oh, nothing's changed, we've got the same rules." Well, I've seen this 48-page report and the things they want to do. It's a very significant and dramatic change. Maybe the Minister of Rural Affairs hasn't looked at this 48-page report. We couldn't get it out of the government. They wouldn't give it to us. We had to get it through other channels.

That's the kind of open government we're dealing with, the Liberal government, the McGuinty Liberal government of Ontario, who have lost track of rural Ontario, who have lost track of small-town Ontario.

**Mr. Yakabuski:** They just don't care.

**Mr. Runciman:** They simply don't care. They've written it off. There's no political benefit to them anymore. They're focusing on what's going to get them re-elected, or hopefully re-elected from their perspective.

I'm going to leave some time for some of my colleagues. I think I've pretty well summed it up from my perspective. I had an opportunity that I didn't have during the tourism debate

I could say a couple of things about tourism. The whip is saying I can take a couple more minutes since I didn't have an opportunity to participate. I represent a riding with the Rideau Lakes and the Thousand Islands. Tourism is a significant factor. This Friday, I'm meeting with Senator Jim Wright, halfway across the Thousand Islands Bridge, to talk about joint concerns and initiatives.

I have to say that—and I can't lay the blame for this at the doorstep of the provincial government necessarily. I have to tell you, and I've said this before, I was in the States last fall on a bus tour. My wife and I were sitting with a group of Americans, most of them from Connecticut. We were having a very nice meal together and they said, "Can you tell us, why do Canadians hate Americans?" They were quite sincere. "Why do Canadians hate Americans?" I have to tell you, there is that sentiment out there, that feeling. It's true—

**Mr. McNeely:** We love Americans.

**Mr. Runciman:** Well, I do too. We love Americans. But because of some actions by federal Liberals, essentially, which received widespread publicity on CNN, the Fox network and so on, they drove home a message, and

former Prime Minister Martin's comments and criticism of the United States.

I think certainly a portion of the reluctance of Americans to visit this country can be laid at the doorstep of the former federal Liberal government—Prime Minister Martin and Prime Minister Chrétien's government—which was so critical and unfriendly to our great friends in the United States. Some of that has come back to bite us. I know there's a reluctance on the part of the benches across to admit that because of their affinity with their federal cousins, but that's the reality.

I think there's a lot of work to be done here. Certainly, I think we can't write off the American market. We have to focus more attention and remind them that we are great friends. I think the Australians are their best friends now. I'd like to see the tourism numbers for Australia from the United States. I suspect they've gone up pretty dramatically given the approach of the Australians in terms of their relationship with the United States.

I think there are things we can do, certainly at the provincial level, to enhance the relationship and to encourage more of our great friends to visit this wonderful province and this wonderful country.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Toronto—Danforth.

**Mr. Peter Tabuns (Toronto—Danforth):** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

*Applause.*

**Mr. Tabuns:** I have to say again, it's gratifying to have members of the government applaud me, at least at the beginning. I know that sort of decays as the evening wears on, but I'll take it when I can get it.

I was clearly not here in the 1980s and 1990s when earlier debates went on about closure. I don't remember the details of this perfidy or that sin, so I won't speak to the past history of who did what.

*Applause.*

**Mr. Tabuns:** I can see to the great appreciation of the Minister of Tourism. I have to say, I appreciate the very civil and straightforward approach of the minister in presenting his closure motion today. I just, as he correctly predicted, disagree fundamentally with this time allocation or closure motion.

It is closure, and what I find extraordinary is that I don't really see the reason for it. Every party in this House has been addressing this issue. People have been speaking reasonably. We have not been seeing any odd procedural tricks. I may be wrong, but it appeared to me that members of the government party have been speaking under their time allocation as we've gone along. I see a nod from across the aisle. I see other people who continue to work studiously at their particular tasks at their desks. I assume I haven't outraged them. What we have had in this House is a debate that has gone on without being dragged out, without being held up, without people trying to act unreasonably.

So I have to ask, why on earth would the government proceed with a time allocation motion? It just doesn't make any sense, given the performance, the behaviour in



this House. What is the unreasonable behaviour that has made it necessary for the government to come forward and say, "We have to have time allocation. We have to have closure. We have to end this." I don't think it's justifiable, frankly. The business of the House has been rolling on. We've been seeing that with other bills as well. People have debated those bills. People have behaved reasonably. All parties have behaved reasonably in terms of arguing the points that are before this House. Why on earth would we have time allocation? Why not let the parties actually debate the issue?

I think of the history of closure in Parliaments in this country, and closure has been opposed ferociously by all parties in opposition for precisely the reasons that I'm sure the Minister of Tourism has opposed it in the past. Debate, the airing of issues in this House, is a crucial part of democracy. Sometimes our debates are not pretty. Sometimes our debates are not informed. I have heard members read out the list of members of the junior hockey teams in their ridings during debates. I think the members of those hockey teams deserve to be honoured, but perhaps the content of that speech didn't reflect the matter before them.

**Mr. Marchese:** They named all the lakes.

**Mr. Tabuns:** Some have named lakes, others have read from dictionaries, I'm sure, but the reality is that in this debate—

**Mr. Yakabuski:** Peter, you have no lakes in your riding, otherwise you'd be talking about them.

**Mr. Tabuns:** Well, I have to say that some have alleged that I have no lakes in my riding, but in fact I have shoreline on Lake Ontario. It's fairly large. In any event, I have to say I don't know what it is about evening settings but they seem to create an energy amongst members that one doesn't see earlier in the day.

I would say to the Minister of Tourism, the House leader, who has introduced this motion, that it's not too late to withdraw the motion, to say, "I made a mistake. The reasonable arguments put forward by the member from Toronto-Danforth have moved me." He could stand up and say, "You know, I can see why we need more debate on this issue. I understand why this whole matter is so important that it should be thoroughly canvassed." That is an important point here. This bill is not a minor bill.

**Mr. Marchese:** It's a biggie.

**Mr. Tabuns:** It's a biggie. It does not touch on matters that are of small import; it touches on matters that are of import to large numbers of people across this province because it touches on the availability of housing that they can afford. It touches on their ability to build and have decent lives.

As I had opportunity to say yesterday, the average income of tenants in this province is approximately half that of the average income of homeowners. Now, averages mask different points. There are tenants in this province, there are tenants in this city, I'm sure there are tenants within one or two blocks of this building who have high incomes, but a large number of the tenants in this prov-

ince are of low income. For them, preservation of a big chunk, a big stock of affordable housing is absolutely crucial. This bill allows the continued erosion, the continued movement of affordable units out of the universe, out of the market that these people can afford, and that matters profoundly.

### 1930

In a society where people are desperate for housing, where you have overcrowding, where you have people whose fundamentals of life are constantly under stress, you have social ills. If you look at some of the problems that we face in this society—violence, teen pregnancy, AIDS—and look at the conditions in which people do not care as much about their lives, commonly you will find situations where people are pressed to the point of desperation. So for us, with this bill—"for us"; my apologies—for this Liberal government to move forward with a bill that essentially continues the legacy of Mike Harris to decontrol units, to continue moving rents up, to continue reducing the availability of affordable units to tenants, is directly contrary to their stated understanding of the world and of how we should be dealing with this society.

All parties try to balance the needs of different parts of society. They look at those who support them, they look at those who don't support them but might be mobilized against them and they think, "How do I make sure that I have a bill that meets the greatest needs in this society? How do I have a bill that really moves forward the social goals that I believed in when I was elected?" I'm going to set aside the promises that were made in the last election. I know I had a chance to talk to a number of members on the government benches over the last 20 years when I was a city councillor. I got a chance to talk to people, I got a sense of their careers and I got a sense of how they saw the world, and I don't believe this bill reflects how they see the world. I don't know what deal was made, because some deal was made. Some agreement was made with landlords to say, "Here's the saw-off. We're going to continue these items, we're going to take a little bit away from you, but the vacancy decontrol, the meat and potatoes of increasing your profit on large rental apartment buildings in this province, is going to be protected." The price for that protection is social disruption. The price for that protection is increased crowding, lower disposable incomes, more difficulty for people to provide themselves with decent food, more difficulty for newcomers to establish themselves.

Interestingly, when you look at the question of overcrowding—and this bill will result in more overcrowding. The Minister of Tourism is proposing closure. The reality, though, is that this is a lot bigger than closure. When you look at tuberculosis—I'll pick one example. In South Africa, tuberculosis was endemic throughout the apartheid times and may well be endemic still. It was endemic in those times, and South African officials would say, "Well, we've got tuberculosis. There must be some genetic disposition on the part of the black population towards tuberculosis." There wasn't a genetic disposition



towards tuberculosis; there was a problem of overcrowding that led to the spread of respiratory diseases, tuberculosis being the most virulent.

I will tell the minister this evening that I have gone through apartment buildings in this city where you have two families packed into a small apartment because that's all they can afford. This bill, with vacancy decontrol, will continue to drive up rents and will continue to make affordability a bigger and bigger problem and, because it's a bigger problem, it will mean that the health of those people in those apartments will suffer. That is contrary not just to the stated, but the interior beliefs of many of the people who sit on the government benches.

The members in this House from Toronto who have large apartment buildings in their ridings are going to continue to face those problems in their constituency offices of people who come to them and say, "I'm desperate. I can't afford to live here," or "I can afford to live here, but the building is so badly deteriorated I have to move, but everything else that's available has gone through decontrol and so I can't afford to move out. I'm trapped in this building. What can you do?" I've dealt with people, when I was a city councillor, facing those sorts of crises in their lives. Affordability of housing, the ability to move, the ability to control your destiny, is a crucial issue in human life. And this bill, by preserving Harris's vacancy decontrol—and that's one of the things I find startling, that that legacy would be carried on by the government party—means that the ability to move and have people retain control of their lives is undermined. I think that, Minister of Tourism, on that basis alone, because of that issue, this government should remove, pull back, their motion for time allocation, for closure, because the issue is so fundamental for the well-being of people in this province.

I've talked about affordability of housing, I've talked about the potential health impacts, I've talked about the social impacts, but I also want to talk about the energy issue, because again I say to those members who represent Ottawa Centre, Ottawa South, Scarborough Centre, Toronto Centre, myself in Toronto—Danforth, Beaches—East York, people who represent the people who live in the Jane-Finch area, that to the extent that landlords proceed with individual metering without first having invested in energy efficiency, they are going to invite on their heads a swamping by phone calls about profound problems with affordability. I want to say to you that if you proceed with a bill that eliminates the incentive for landlords to invest in efficiency, if those efficiency investments are not made before you put in the individual meters, members in this House who represent ridings with large apartment buildings inhabited by people of limited means are going to be dealing with an awful lot of desperate people trying to figure out how to make it all work. And they're going to have tremendous difficulty making it work.

As I said previously, if in fact you have a landlord who puts in an energy-efficient fridge, who makes sure that you have double-pane windows, who makes sure

there is insulation in the walls, weatherproofing in the walls—if you make sure that what the individual meters cover is essentially the discretionary use of power, then it makes sense to me. People will conserve, they won't waste power unnecessarily, they'll turn lights off and they'll save themselves a few bucks. But if you put individual metering on a north-facing corner unit in many of the apartment buildings in this city or in Ottawa, come January and February, those people are going to be facing a very difficult time if that building has not had the efficiency measures put in place. I think that too is a very important issue that this government should consider with this closure motion before us: No question that that will come back to bite every member who votes in favour. If this bill is not amended to protect those people who are going to struggle with those energy bills—not the discretionary stuff but the "How do I keep myself warm in winter and cool enough in summer to sleep" ones—there will be big problems. We have to think about that one. I appreciate the idea of individual metering to reduce the discretionary waste of energy. I believe that the Minister of Tourism feels the same way. He has a long history in these matters. So I understand that logic, but if you don't do the previous step—having managed a social housing complex where people paid individually and having dealt with the profound problems those people had made me cautious about putting the cost of heat to keep them alive on top of their rent. It worries me, and I think the government should be worried, and I think every Member of Provincial Parliament who represents an area with large apartment buildings where this will happen should be cautious—profoundly cautious.

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We will deal with a lot of bills in this House. We'll deal with bills of great import and of lesser import. This is a bill of great import. This bill is going to have an effect on the population of this province for many years to come. When interest rates start to rise, when the condo boom is over, if we should have a recession and a whole bunch of people need to flood into apartments that they can afford, we are going to face some profound social strains in this province.

For those reasons, I think the debate over this bill should not be cut off tonight, because I don't think, frankly, that those issues have been fully thought through by the government. I think that debate on those issues is valuable to the opposition and to the government. Smart government will listen to its critics and, without ever giving them compliments, take on the things that they suggest which are useful to them. I'm not going to flatter myself and say that I will have that impact, but I would suggest to any government that listening to criticism and picking up the useful bits is not a bad strategy. On this occasion, on this bill, listen. Let the opposition continue, let the government benches continue and then let us have a vote. But I think closure on this motion, time allocation on this, is far too premature, is not a reasonable motion to put forward given the behaviour in the House. If it's



within the power of the Minister of Tourism, the House leader, it should be withdrawn.

With that, I will turn the floor over to the next speaker.

**Hon. Mrs. Dombrowsky:** I'm happy that I have this opportunity to stand in the House and respond to some of the comments that have been made, particularly by the member from Leeds–Grenville. I apologize. I did get a little carried away in trying to remind the honourable member from Leeds–Grenville, who very ridiculously would suggest that our government is urban-centric, that our government is very committed to investing in rural Ontario and to considering the well-being of rural residents.

**Hon. Mr. Bradley:** Who signed that water regulation?

**Hon. Mrs. Dombrowsky:** That was actually my heckle. My colleague the Minister of Tourism asks, "Who signed regulation 170?" This was a regulation that was going to potentially close hundreds, maybe even thousands of halls in rural Ontario—municipal halls, service club halls, community centres—facilities that serve our public. This regulation had the potential to close them, and that regulation was signed into law by none other than the member from Leeds–Grenville, when he was not just a member of government but a member of cabinet and chair of cabinet.

He was also a member of the government that downloaded provincial highways. I'm from rural Ontario, eastern Ontario. Fully 40% of the highways that were downloaded in the province of Ontario were downloaded in eastern Ontario, so I want to know, where was the member from Leeds–Grenville? Was he on the back bench standing up for his people? I think not. Otherwise we would not have had fully 40% of Ontario highways downloaded—and in not so very good condition—in eastern Ontario.

**Mr. Yakabuski:** Are you taking them back? Are you uploading them?

**Hon. Mrs. Dombrowsky:** The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke asked—

**The Acting Speaker:** I would ask the member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke to refrain from heckling the Minister of Agriculture and Food so that I can hear her make her presentation.

I'll return to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.

**Hon. Mrs. Dombrowsky:** Actually, the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke brings up an interesting note. He asks, "Are you taking them back?" Do you know what we're doing? We're going something that the previous government never did for rural Ontario. We're helping them by providing them with COMRIF grants to improve the roads that you downloaded that they can't afford to improve. That has been our commitment, in addition to our investments in health care with family health teams, in addition to our investments in education to ensure that rural schools stay open, in addition to our investments for Move Ontario, which were unconditional dollars that flowed to municipalities across Ontario—a program, by the way, that members of the opposition

have criticized. They've criticized our government helping municipalities improve their infrastructure.

I just wanted the opportunity to remind the people listening and for the public record that our government is committed to investing in rural Ontario. Unlike the previous government, which downloaded and imposed things like regulation 170, we want to work with our rural stakeholders, our rural constituents, and build a better province.

**Mr. Yakabuski:** It's wonderful to have the opportunity to speak to this tonight. To those people listening and watching tonight, it is kind of sad, actually. For those people in TV land, it is almost as likely that in this House, the storied legislative chamber of the province of Ontario, you are as likely to be debating a time allocation motion as you are to be debating legislation. It was only last week that we just dealt with the most—I couldn't believe it—draconian, Orwellian time allocation motion that I have ever seen in my life, and we're now at it again. Time allocation motions are what we're debating instead of the legislation that the people of the province of Ontario expect and want us to debate so that, at the end of the day, the results and the laws that are passed are in the best interests of the people of Ontario. But no, this government and the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs like to use that statement "committed." Well, this government seems to be committed to subverting the democratic process in this chamber by ensuring that members who represent their constituencies will not have the opportunity to debate legislation in this House.

I can absolutely understand why my colleague from Leeds–Grenville gets a little animated sometimes. He gets a little fired up when he sees what's going on with this government. At the same time, it's the same people. For every person on that side who has a driver and a fancy office we can find quotes, when they were in opposition, that absolutely lambasted the government if they happened to bring in a time allocation motion to deal with a piece of legislation, how they would never do that, how they just thought it was the worst possible thing that a government could do, that it was an insult to the people and an affront to democracy. However, it seems that when they get those fancy cars and decorated offices, they change their tune. All of a sudden now, democracy takes on a different flavour. Democracy is defined completely differently, because then they say, "You know what? My goodness gracious, we're Liberals and now we're the government and we're going to show them because we do everything better. We know everything." Holy Hannah, we can't allow the people to have their way. The Liberals must have their way because they're more intellectual. They understand things better. They've got it all figured out.

All you've got to do is look at the bills coming forward; just look at them. It's about control: "We'll tell you what to do, people, because we know best." It's the "father knows best" mentality, and the father is—well, no, he represents—well, no, he doesn't do that, either. He comes originally from the riding of Ottawa South. Now



he lives in Toronto and we're not sure who he represents. But, anyway, he believes that father knows best, and he's got his little minions lined up in the front row here.

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**Mr. Marchese:** How many?

**Mr. Yakabuski:** I don't know how many there are. But they're making sure we follow through with what daddy says. We're going to make sure that the Liberal footprint is all over this province, because we're going to ensure that people no longer have to worry about thinking for themselves. Thinking for themselves is passé. No, don't let the people think for themselves; let the Liberals do it for them. We're going to ensure that that will be something they don't have to worry about anymore, because we know that under the Liberal government they're not going to have to time to think for themselves about legislation. They're going to be too busy working their butts off to pay the taxes that this government has foisted upon them.

It would be nice if we could be in this chamber talking about legislation, but here we are talking about time allocation motions. We're talking about leadership. We're talking about wrong-headedness on the part of the government.

You know, it was almost comical today to see the member from Parkdale-High Park in here giving a statement. He barely got the words out and he was heading for the door, out there telling the people how he wants to be the Liberal leader in Ottawa. You want to talk about an insult to democracy? That's an insult to democracy. He comes in and makes a cameo appearance, gives a statement, and then beats it for the door so he can get back to what he really wants to do, and that's campaign for the federal Liberal leadership. If Dalton McGuinty was a leader, he'd be telling him to pack his bags and hit the road to Ottawa, and don't come walking into this chamber, because he's not interested in representing the people of Parkdale-High Park at all.

I took exception to some of the members of the government telling the member for Leeds-Grenville that he's posturing because he's worried about his seat. I can tell you that the member for Leeds-Grenville has had that seat since 1981 because he has worked his you know what off for those people in Leeds-Grenville, and he'll continue to be the member for Leeds-Grenville as long as he chooses to serve, because he serves like no other in this House.

But I can tell some of those members who are recently elected on the government side that they should be worried about their seats. The way this government is treating the democratic process and the taxpayers of this province, they should all be worried about their seats. They should be worried about their seats because on October 4, 2007, the people will have their say. Democracy will have another opportunity to reign in the province of Ontario, as much as you people over there want to shove it under the table and say, "Forget about democracy. Time allocation is the call of the day." In 2007, the people will get their chance again. Mark my words, folks,

you'll want to be watching that night, because the people will have their revenge on you.

**Time allocation:** You spoke against it and now you think it's the best thing since sliced bread. Shame on you. Shame on you.

**The Acting Speaker:** Thank you. The member for Trinity-Spadina.

**Mr. Marchese:** It's a pleasure to speak to any bill or any motion. I welcome the citizens of Ontario. It's five minutes to 8. We're on live. It's Tuesday, May 16. So if you're watching another hour, we're not on live. That's why I tell you the time.

I'm happy to attack this government when it introduces strangulation motions, and I know why they're doing it. They're doing it because this particular bill affects over three million people. Imagine if three million people could mobilize themselves to fight this government, or indeed any other government. Imagine giving them the time to be able to mobilize against it.

I know my good buddy Mr. Duguid from Scarborough Centre loves this bill. He has been talking to tenants, and they love him and his government for this bill. My suspicion is that there are millions of tenants out there who disagree with Monsieur Gerretsen and Monsieur Duguid from Scarborough Centre, and I'm looking forward to seeing them in committee. I'm hoping they're going to come to committee, whether they're going to be deputing or not, to witness the discussion, the debate that we're going to have between the member from Scarborough Centre and myself and, from time to time, the minister, when he comes at the beginning of the debates.

This is designed to make sure that tenants do not wake up, that they sleep comfortably in their apartments, not having to worry about anything. This bill will simply not change anything. They can just go back, stay asleep and be cozy at night. They're not to worry about anything. It's our intention to wake as many tenants up to the reality of this bill as we can.

I know that the Minister of Tourism talked about the changes we made in 1992-93 around issues of the rules in this place. It is true: Peterson changed the rules. After 42 years of Conservative rule, he probably felt that he had to make changes. Mr. Rae, Mr. Cooke at the time and many of the caucus members of the NDP of the 1990s were unhappy that they weren't able to do much, because the Liberals who just lost their seats in government couldn't stand the idea of being out of office, much less the Tories who had been pushed aside as well for a couple of terms.

For us, it was a real pleasure to be in power. But imagine: You have Liberals and Tories unhappy to be out of power. They did their best to stall, to make sure nothing passed in that Legislature, and the government of the day decided to change the rules. I wasn't happy about that; I've got to tell you, for the record, I wasn't happy about that, because in the early days, prior to my time here, members could debate for as long as they wanted to. It was a good thing. I know for some people it might have been a terrible thing, to be able to go on for hours and hours, because some of the citizens watching might



say, "Good God, can't we get rid of some of those speakers?" I appreciate that. But good or bad, orators or not, the ability to speak as long as you wanted on any bill was a good thing, and we changed that. That was a mistake, and it was wrong, but our government did that. I was trying to give you a rationale as to why they did that, but I didn't support it.

The Tories got into power, and they made more changes to the rules. So every government has had an opportunity—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Marchese:** —including John here, next to me, who's got a very sonorous voice. You notice how the voice rebounds from one end of the room to the other? God bless, John, I'm telling you. It's great when you're speaking, but when another speaker is speaking beside you, it can clash. It can, you know?

**Mr. Yakabuski:** Oh, I apologize.

**Mr. Marchese:** Did I say anything wrong?

**Mr. Yakabuski:** No, and whatever I said, I take it all back.

**Mr. Marchese:** It's not what you said; it's just that you have a sonorous voice, and it rebounds in this room. So when you're speaking and I'm speaking at the same time, I don't know who's being heard more.

**Mr. Yakabuski:** So I should only speak when you're not speaking?

**Mr. Marchese:** Do you think? From time to time, or just whisper it to me. I have no problem with that. I've got no problem with you—

**The Acting Speaker:** Could I be part of this conversation, please?

**Mr. Marchese:** I'm speaking through you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Trinity-Spadina has the floor.

**Mr. Marchese:** I was speaking through you. My chat with my good friend Mr. Yakabuski is just a friendly chat.

So we changed the rules, the Tories changed the rules after us and the Liberals changed them before us. It was a mistake. We continue to do it.

The Minister of Tourism: Every time there was a strangulation motion, he was first up. He was always there at the ready. He was a true soldier and still is. He should be regarded as the true soldier that he has been for 25 years and moving on—

**Mr. Yakabuski:** For 29 years, just like Norm Sterling from Lanark-Carleton.

**Mr. Marchese:** A great soldier. Every time there was a strangulation motion presented by the Tories, he was there, ready for the fight, because he felt there should always be a long debate on every issue.

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New Democrats say this is an important bill that touches over three million people. A third of the households in Ontario are tenants. So when I look at the promise that says, "We will bring back real rent control that protects tenants from excessive rent increases," and they

do not do that—it is a promise that was made, and not keeping it is egregious in nature. I hope the tenants will punish them and the minister. "We will get rid of vacancy decontrol, which allows unlimited increases on a unit when a tenant leaves. It will be gone." How easy it was for the Liberals—McGuinty, Gerretsen and others—to make this promise when they were in opposition. How easy it was.

Then they get into government, and they don't feel accountable for the promises. They don't feel they have to account. They can just move on. "Please, don't focus on the promises. Look at the bill and see whether you're satisfied. The promises? Yes, of course everybody makes promises. Of course they do, but look at what we Liberals produce for you. It's not our promises that count; it's what we produce for you afterwards that matters."

It's lovely to see the Liberals accuse the Tories of having two positions. I've now discovered that the Liberals have three, not two. It's not this or that; they've got three now to account for anything and everything. It's the Liberals that we have attacked for being saponaceous types; these are the people that we attack on a regular basis, because they have no firm foundation. They stand for nothing. So when they attack the Tories for having two positions, it's laughable. You understand what I'm saying, Speaker. It's laughable. It's ridiculous. They crack me up when they say that. Every day they stand up to talk about this, they crack me up. I'm in tears of laughter every day. God bless.

**Mr. Yakabuski:** Well, the people are crying too.

**Mr. Marchese:** They said that they could see decontrol, Monsieur Peterson, mon ami, was going to go. "It's gone." That was the promise.

**Mr. John Milloy (Kitchener Centre):** What's "saponaceous" again?

**Mr. Marchese:** You'll have to look it up.

That was the promise before 2003. According to the promise, it's a done deal. Vacancy decontrol is gone, does not exist. But this bill keeps vacancy decontrol. Does that sound inconsistent between the promise and the reality of the bill that's before us?

**Mr. Yakabuski:** Not for Liberals.

**Mr. Marchese:** That's the point. For Liberals, it's not inconsistent to say something before the election and do something else after. "Look at what we do. That's what matters." I thought promises mattered more than what we end up doing, because promises are presumably the foundations of the bills that we present. You recall that the Tories got rid of rent control by introducing vacancy decontrol. Vacancy decontrol was the way to kill rent control, without saying so. In fact they could say, as they did, that that was the Tenant Protection Act. God bless the Tories too on that issue, in that regard. But we're here to attack the Liberals, not the Tories. You guys are passé; you no longer matter. So my attacks are on the Liberals.

Vacancy decontrol means this—I've said it before and I'll repeat it—when you leave one unit and you go next door to another unit, you get whacked. You don't even have to leave the building. You go to another unit here,



you get whacked with rent increases. You go to another unit here, same building, you get whacked with rent increases. That's what vacancy decontrol means. It means that when you leave your room to go somewhere else, there are no rent controls. You get whacked with rent increases. That's what vacancy decontrol means. It's a way of killing rent control by that simple mechanism.

Recall, ministers present here—there are a few of you—that 75% of tenants move in a five-year period. It's an old statistic, but my sense is that if you were to hire some economist again, they would conclude the same thing applies today, that a whole lot of people move within a five-year span. If it was 75% of the people moving eight or nine years ago it's still the same today, which means that renters who live in buildings get whacked on a daily basis. Tenants should be alarmed by this. I'm alarmed by it, and I know that tenants who are going to come to committee to talk to my good friend from Scarborough Centre are going to agree with me and disagree with him. He's right here. He's probably next to speak.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Marchese:** Pardon?

**Hon. Mary Anne V. Chambers (Minister of Children and Youth Services):** Can a person actually move if they've been whacked?

**Mr. Marchese:** Can a person actually move and get whacked? Yes.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Marchese:** No. If they stay, they are protected from disproportionate increases because, you remember, the landlord can charge whatever he or she wants, whatever the market can bear, whatever the landlord thinks he can raise. I hope we're not having difficulty understanding this, because that's what this is about. The Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing understands this, because he's the minister. But the point is that when you move, rents can be jacked up as much as they want, and once you stay in place, rent control kicks in. So rent control kicks back in once you resettle in another apartment.

**Mr. Joseph N. Tascona (Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford):** We heard that.

**Mr. Marchese:** Is that clear? Yes, you heard, but I don't know if you understand it or if you know it. I don't know. Liberals keep on asking questions, so we don't know whether they know this or not.

Now, the minister said the other day, "The proposed Residential Tenancies Act would continue to allow landlords and tenants to negotiate starting rents on vacant units so that tenants could continue to benefit from the renter's market." That's what he said.

**Hon. John Gerretsen (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing):** No, I didn't.

**Mr. Marchese:** Sorry? It's in your speech. You said it. It's your speech. I know the minister would like to take it back.

**Hon. Mr. Gerretsen:** Is it in Hansard?

**Mr. Marchese:** Of course it is. You read it. I was reading from the speech by the minister, who has no recollection of what he said.

But imagine, my good friend from Toronto-Danforth, what he just said is that the landlord and the tenant come in, and they sit down and chat. They say, "Okay, what are you willing to pay?" The renter says, "I don't know. I can't afford the kind of rates you're talking about." So the landlord says, "Yes, but let's talk and see what we can agree on, right?" Do you think that kind of discussion is going on?

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Marchese:** Was I not speaking through you?

**The Acting Speaker:** No you weren't. I'm enjoying your speech very much, but I would ask you again, as I'm obligated to do, to make your comments through the Chair.

**Mr. Marchese:** I beg your pardon. Speaker, I do apologize. That was a serious oversight on my part. So what the minister was saying earlier on is that the two people could just negotiate the rent, not a big deal. He says vacancy rates are so high—do we have a problem?

**The Acting Speaker:** I'm just informing the member for Trinity-Spadina that we're concerned that your remarks are not going to be recorded by Hansard because you're a little too far from your microphone. Perhaps the cameras might be having difficulty as well. If you could just relax, and take your place and conclude your remarks, we're enjoying your speech.

**Mr. Marchese:** You guys have to let me know. If you can't pick me up, let me know, okay?

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Marchese:** I'm just checking with the technicians, just to be sure that they can hear me. Is that okay? Okay. Good.

So, as I was saying, the minister was saying that because vacancy rates are so high, the landlord and the tenant will just negotiate a fair deal because, you know, it's not so bad. Can you believe that, Speaker? Can you believe a landlord sitting down with a tenant and saying, "Let's talk about it"? Since when has a landlord ever sat down with a renter?

*Interjection.*

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**Mr. Marchese:** Joe, are you a landlord? Because I don't want to offend anyone.

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Marchese:** Okay. I'm just worried. I just don't see landlords sitting down and discussing with the renters what is it they would pay. No, the landlord is going to say, "By the way, Mr. So-and-so, here's a notice." They don't even talk with you: "Here's what you've got to pay. If you don't like it, sayonara." That's just the way it works.

Minister Gerretsen, you've got to stand up and tell me how that works, because I've never seen that happen. I've never seen it.

To repeat the line of the minister, "The proposed Residential Tenancies Act will continue to allow landlords



and tenants to negotiate starting rents." It cracks me up, you understand? I can't stop laughing when I read stuff like that. They know, and he knows, it isn't true. Now, it's quite possible that some guy who owns a house might discuss this with a renter or perspective renter coming in.

**Hon. Mr. Gerretsen:** Aha, there you go.

**Mr. Marchese:** Yes, aha. I suspect that most people live in big apartments, right? There are people living in houses, no doubt about it. But the real gouging, I suggest to you, Monsieur Gerretsen, happens in the big rental apartments—20, 15, 30, right? That's where I think it's happening.

Now, if I'm wrong, you've got to let me know, Mr. Gerretsen; I need to be corrected. I want tenants to call me. Call me and call Mr. Gerretsen. Call both of us.

**Hon. Mr. Gerretsen:** Call you.

**Mr. Marchese:** No, call him and call me at the same time. Send him a letter and send me a copy saying how wonderfully this system is working between—kind negotiations and even fair negotiations between landlords and tenants.

Send the letters in real quick, because we've got time. This is going to committee very soon, and I need for you to send your letters.

**Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti (Scarborough Southwest):** Phone number.

**Mr. Marchese:** Do you have a number for Mr. Gerretsen?

**Mr. Berardinetti:** No, for you.

**Mr. Marchese:** You don't have a number.

Listen, you call me up at my office. It's 603—I was going to give you my private line, but that wouldn't work. Here, let me give you my public line: 603-9664 is the public line, area code 416. You call me and let me know. I will send a copy of your letter to Mr. Gerretsen, because I can get his phone number and address. Don't you worry. Share this information with all the Liberal members across Toronto because, man, do they want to hear from you. The member from Scarborough Centre says, "Oh, no, my tenants are happy." I want you from Scarborough—

**Mr. Brad Duguid (Scarborough Centre):** The best protection in 10 years.

**Mr. Marchese:** Are your folks okay too?

**Mr. Duguid:** They want you to get on with this, Rosie, so they can get their protection.

**Mr. Marchese:** The member from—

**Mr. Duguid:** Scarborough Centre.

**Mr. Marchese:** Scarborough—

**Mr. Yakabuski:** Lorenzo is Scarborough Centre.

**Mr. Marchese:** No, the other one is Scarborough Centre.

Lorenzo, he's not telling the truth: Scarborough Southwest. He was trying to—you understand.

The member from Scarborough Southwest is happy to hear from you because he thinks his tenants are really happy about this bill. He believes that vacancy decontrol is something that you asked for. Even the member from Scarborough Centre said, "You asked for it."

I want you to send in the correspondence saying—to me, Marchese, "Yes, we asked for vacancy decontrol because we think it's great." Go to your Liberal members, sit down in their offices and talk to them about this bill. Make sure you get an appointment for Fridays, because every member is available Fridays. Every Liberal member is available Friday; if they're not, they don't want to meet with you.

You make sure, and if you've got a problem with that, you let me now so I can raise it in this House as to which members refused to meet with you because they got no time. The time they have is on a Friday when we have no legislative sitting. That's their time to meet with you.

I'm looking forward to your correspondence for those of you who are watching, and if you're watching this show, I want to send you my notes, the notes from Toronto—Danforth, send you the notes of the Liberals who have spoken on this bill, so that you can compare what we're saying and what they're saying, because there is so, so much to say on the vacancy rates in particular.

On the vacancy rates, the theory goes like this: The theory is that with an increased supply of units, the market will drive rents down. The reality is this: that rents have been increasing across Ontario whether the vacancy rate is high or low.

Rents for two-bedroom apartments in Kitchener increased by 26.5% between 1998 and 2005, while the vacancy rate mostly increased.

London rents and vacancy rates: What we have seen in London is that the vacancy rate for two-bedroom apartments fluctuated between 1998 and 2005, yet the rents for two-bedroom apartments increased by 21.6%. It fluctuated every year from 1998 to 2005, but the rents kept going up. No matter what the vacancy rate was, low or high, the rents went higher and higher every year. So when Liberals and some of their spokespeople and some of the media people tell you it's okay—as one paper said, "Fortunately, it should not be a major concern for most tenants, given the current high vacancy rate." You've got even major papers agreeing with these guys. It's amazing. I wish we had a newspaper in Toronto that would help the New Democrats out. You've got major newspapers helping these people out, saying that vacancy rates are so high they don't have to worry. Yet the examples I have given you for Kitchener and London show that, irrespective of vacancy rates high and low, the rents go up.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Marchese:** Cherry-picking? Member from Scarborough Centre, in the city of Toronto, where 45% of Ontario's tenants live—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Marchese:** Listen to this, because you missed it the last time. In the city of Toronto, where 45% of Ontario's tenants live—half of Ontario tenants live in Toronto—between 1996 and 2005, the average rent for a two-bedroom apartment in Toronto increased by 30%, while the average rent for a one-bedroom apartment increased by 32%. The overall rate of inflation for that



same period was 21%. The rates go up every year. It doesn't matter whether the vacancy rates are high or low; tenants get whacked. They were whacked by the Tories before them and they're getting whacked by the Liberals today.

I'm looking forward to the debate in committee. Kathy Laird, director of legal services at the Advocacy Centre for Tenants Ontario, says the following: "Rent increases will continue to be unregulated when a tenant moves, creating an incentive for landlords to evict and raise the rents. We have an affordability crisis in this province, with rising rents and fewer units." I'm sure the member from Scarborough Centre disagrees with her. In fact, there were just 1,575 vacant three-bedroom units in multi-residential buildings in October 2005, according to Canada Mortgage and Housing Corp.'s most recent rental market survey, and most of those units clearly are beyond the reach of low-income families. There were 124,785 low-income households across Ontario on the active waiting lists for social housing at year-end of 2004.

These statistics ought to make Liberals worry because of their claim that they represent the very wealthy but, oh, also the very poor. Let me give you some other statistics about tenant households. In 2001, 32% of all households in Ontario were renters. That's 1,351,000 tenant households in Ontario; that's a whole lot. Two thirds of low-income people in Ontario lived in tenant households in 1996. Of Ontario's 1.2 million low-income tenants in 1996, 36% were children, 27% were parents, 30% were non-family persons and 7% were spouses or common law partners. Also, 96% of Ontario Works beneficiaries are tenants, but only 17% of these Ontario Works beneficiaries who rent live in subsidized housing. The majority live in rental housing. Most of these people can't afford the rent in the buildings they live in.

Another statistic: Tenant household incomes are declining. The average income of an Ontario renter's household is about half that of a homeowner household: almost \$78,000 for a person owning a home versus \$40,000 for someone who rents. This fact was reinforced by the member from Toronto-Danforth. It clearly shows that those who own homes are much better off than those who are tenants, and those who are tenants are struggling to pay their rent. The median income of Ontario's renter household is less than half of homeowners' households: \$62,000 for the homeowner versus \$32,000 for the renter. In Ontario, the income gap between the median income of homeowners and renters grew by 22% over 15 years, from \$21,000 in 1984 to \$25,000 in 1999.

**2020**

Let's talk about affordability. The cost of adequate shelter should not exceed 30% of total pre-tax household income, yet 42% of Ontario's tenant households pay 30% or more of their household income on shelter costs, and 20% of Ontario tenant households—that's 265,000 people—pay 50% and over of their household income on shelter costs. Close to 300,000 people pay over 50% of their income, while the threshold should be 30%. We're talking about people who can't afford to pay these kinds

of prices in our rental buildings, and the minister says, "It's okay. Things are just fine. The vacancy decontrol issue is not an issue. Renters will be able to go and talk to the landlord and negotiate." Those people paying over 50% for their rent—that's close to 300,000—can go now and sit down with their landlord, because the minister said, "You can go and negotiate."

It's not going to happen. Poor people have no negotiating power. They don't have the resources nor the power to negotiate. The person who's got the power is the landlord, not the tenant. They're in no position to bargain.

The CMHC's housing market forecast data predicted a need for 16,000 starts annually between 1996 and 2001, and over 20,000 after 2001. Here in Ontario, we're facing an affordable housing deficit of over 80,000 units. The minister says, "We're building thousands of affordable housing units." The reality is, as of 2003-04, they have only created 63 affordable units. The minister and his government have not published any data since 2004, and I'll tell you why you haven't done that, Minister: because the facts say you have created little affordable housing and you're too embarrassed to publish the numbers.

Look at this. I've got something that comes from Nancy MacMillan of CMHC, the mayor's office of St. Catharines, and Denise Papaiz of Niagara Regional Housing. They say that they're going to create 19 units of affordable housing—19 units.

**Hon. Mr. Gerretsen:** That's one town.

**Mr. Duguid:** That's just one place. You can make up any number you want.

**Mr. Marchese:** No, member from Scarborough Centre. What I want you and the minister to do to help me is to bring these to me to show me how many units you're building. Just bring the facts to me like this, as I'm doing with you. The minister and the member from Scarborough Centre say, "You're just making it up." Well, I don't want you to make up anything. Bring me the facts.

**Mr. David Zimmer (Willowdale):** Calm down.

**Mr. Marchese:** And you, member from Willowdale, you've got thousands and thousands of tenants in your riding. You bring me the facts. Bring me the tenants in your riding who are saying they love vacancy decontrol. Member from Willowdale, bring me your tenants. If you guys could bring me more than a couple, I would just sit down and be quiet. Bring me a couple, at least, who will say that vacancy decontrol is good for them.

**Mr. Duguid:** If you sit down, I'll speak to that.

**Mr. Marchese:** Member from Scarborough Centre, you're going to have your opportunity in two minutes and 49 seconds to stand up and show us your facts and your brilliance at the same time.

**Mr. Duguid:** I can't show you that. I don't have any. I'll give you what I have.

**Mr. Marchese:** Show it if you can. Give us your best.

In terms of affordable units, I want him to produce these facts. Maybe Bill Wrye—you're back there behind the Speaker—can get him some facts on affordable housing. Bring it to them, because you've got the facts in your



head. Just write it down. Bring them to me. Send them over so I can read it for the record. Then show me how many affordable units you've built, because you claim you've built 3,000 to 5,000 units of affordable housing. Bring them to me and read them out for the record. I wait with eagerness for the member from Scarborough Centre to give me the facts.

**Mr. Berardinetti:** You can't handle the facts.

**Mr. Marchese:** "You can't handle the facts." You guys crack me up, day in and day out.

The member from Toronto–Danforth talked about the submetering issue. Because I don't have much time to talk about it, people can refer to my previous speech or the speech made by the member from Toronto–Danforth. The reality is that in non-electrically heated apartments, which make up about 70% of the stock, the cost of installing and operating the meter outweighs the possible savings. Fully 70% of the stock is non-electrically heated apartments, yet these people are going to waste millions of dollars. The tenants are going to have to pay for having meters in their apartments. You've got to wonder about the intelligence of this government. You've got to wonder.

What I'm asking you tenants to do is to call me, call the Minister of Housing, call the members from Scarborough, call the member from Willowdale and call all the members of Toronto, because 45% of all the tenants are here in Toronto. If you love vacancy decontrol, please tell me so I can feel good and not say any more. But if you don't, you've got to let the Liberals know, because they're so cocky and so proud of themselves, so full of hubris that they will explode at any moment. Come to committee. If you want to speak, call me so we can make sure you're put on that list. If you can't get on the list, tell the government why you couldn't: because they've got a limited number of days to speak to this bill.

I'm looking forward to debate on this bill. I'm looking forward to debate with my friends from Scarborough and looking forward to debate with my friend the member from Willowdale and all the Toronto members who are so proud to support Minister Gerretsen's bill. I'm looking forward to it.

**Mr. Duguid:** I must say, I did enjoy the speech given by the member from Trinity–Spadina. I didn't agree with a lot of what he said, but it's always enjoyable. He's really beginning to wear a little bit of a crease in the carpet here. It's starting to wear out from his walking back and forth, so I'm glad you called him to order and got him to settle down and stay in his seat.

It's important that people know what we're talking about here. We are talking about a time allocation motion. We're always reluctant to bring these in. We don't have a history of bringing them in at every opportunity. We could bring them in a lot more often if we wanted to be like the previous government, but we've chosen not to do that. But there comes a time, and we feel this is the time for this bill, after close to seven hours—in fact, I think it's over seven hours—of debate. Mr. Marchese has probably spoken for almost two hours himself on this

bill. I think we've heard as much as we can hear on this bill in this chamber.

We want to hear from the people out there. We want to go to committee so we can hear from tenants, so we can hear from landlords, so we can hear from the public. We know that this is the most effective protections brought forward for tenants that we've seen in Ontario for over 10 years. We know that. Yes, we're humble about it, but we're also proud of the fact that this bill is going to provide better protection for tenants, so we want to get to committee where we can hear directly from tenants and talk to them about the importance of this bill. It will improve the quality of their lives.

I'll go through that in a second, but first I want to talk a little about this time allocation motion and the fact that the previous government allocated about 50% of their bills to time allocation, one of every two bills. We allocate about 10% of our bills. We'd like to do less, but at the end of the day, we have to move forward and get the process going. We have to move forward so we can get bills like this to committee to give the public an opportunity to have their say. Then it comes back here. Contrary to the previous government in their last year in office, we'll probably have debate here at third reading as well, where we'll hear from Mr. Marchese and his colleagues again on what they have to say about the bill. I hope that after it goes to committee maybe they'll be a little bit more positive.

If I'm a tenant out there listening, I'm wondering, "What's in this bill for me?" Well, let's talk a little bit about why this bill is certainly on the side of tenants. There was an eviction process brought in by the previous government in the Tenant Protection Act, which we all know was nothing but a—it was really the tenant eviction act, in a lot of ways. Under the Tenant Protection Act, they brought in a five-day period of notice. A tenant had to determine within five days of getting an eviction notice whether they were going to dispute it. The Ombudsman himself said that was unfair to tenants. Tenants told us that was unfair to them. We made a commitment in the previous election to improve protections for tenants, so we went from one end of this province to the other, to 10 different cities, to hear what tenants had to say. We heard from thousands of tenants and we heard from hundreds of landlords as well, so we heard from all sides, all stakeholders. This is one of the things that tenants right across the province were concerned about, so we decided we'd go beyond what we committed to do, which was really to fix up this process and try to improve it, maybe expand the notice periods. We didn't just do that; we scrapped the default system altogether. We scrapped it because we felt it was unfair to tenants, that tenants deserve to have a public hearing, that tenants deserve to go to the tribunal and have a hearing. They were being kicked out of their homes, and they deserve a hearing. I think landlords recognize as well that they will have an opportunity. Quite often, it's not going to take any longer for them to get a tenant who's not paying their rent out of there; it won't take any longer. But at least



tenants will have the opportunity to have their say at a hearing. We think that's fair protection. It goes, frankly, well beyond the original commitment we made. We've gone well beyond that commitment for tenants.

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When we look at the original guideline that was put forward, the guideline was based on a formula, and that formula could change in an election year, could be manipulated, and I'm sure that at times it was. We've brought forward a transparent guideline for tenants based on the cost of living, something that's fair. Landlords can live with it. They might have preferred the previous guideline, but they can live with this because they know what they're getting. It's transparent, and I think it's fair. It's based on the cost of living. Tenants will benefit as well. If we had had that guideline in place for tenants between the years 1997 and 2003, instead of increasing rents by 21%, the guideline would have increased rents by 15%, a fair amount based on the cost of living, a cost of living that tenants have to live within as well.

We're also looking at renewing the mandate of the tribunal. That's one of the things we heard right across the province from tenants, and we heard it from landlords too. Neither one really liked the way the tribunal worked. We wanted to be more customer-oriented. We wanted to show greater respect for both landlords and tenants when they appear before them. We've changed the name of the tribunal to the Landlord and Tenant Board, but it's more than just a name change; it's a cultural shift that we want to see in this board to make it more customer-oriented. To do that, we're making the forms easier to use and understand. We're ensuring that when an eviction is notice sent to a tenant, the new Landlord and Tenant Board will also send notice to the tenant—they're starting to do that already at the request of the minister—so the tenant can understand what's going on. That's important, because tenants across this province deserve to understand how the eviction process works.

But it's not all about an eviction process. There are other benefits, other reasons why, if I were a tenant, I'd be very pleased with this legislation and would want this legislation to move from this chamber to committee and onwards to approval so that those protections can be available for me.

I look at above-guideline increases. Above-guideline increases were probably the biggest concern that most tenants had when it came to increasing rents. We've brought in a number of measures that are going to improve above-guideline increases and make them fair for tenants. To begin, when a capital item is applied for and an increase is warranted and awarded to a landlord, when that capital work is finished and paid for, the tenants' rent will now come down. Rather than have their rents increased and then stay increased forever, the tenants will then have their rents come down. That's fair and it's balanced.

It's the same thing when we look at the caps for above-guideline increases. Tenants were concerned about wanting some real and improved rent control. We've

done that through the capping of above-guideline increases. Now you'll have a cap on the amount that a landlord can get for an above-guideline rent increase. It used to be that they'd get a guideline award of 4% per year and that could go on forever until that asset was paid for. Now it's going to be 3% a year maximum and it's going to be for a maximum of three years. It's a real cap. That will be fair to landlords. They'll still get a decent return on the investments they make and it won't dissuade them from making those investments. But at the same time, tenants won't have to pay above-guideline increases over and over again, year after year after year, something that tenants will be very, very pleased with indeed.

When we look at the guidelines for utility increases, as it is now, if a utility increase takes place, if there's an extraordinary increase in energy costs—electricity—a landlord can apply for an above-guideline increase, and that increase will stay on the tenant's rent forever. We're saying that's not really fair. If energy costs go down, tenants should benefit from that too, because the landlord's cost is going down. What we're doing is ensuring that tenants can now benefit from energy cost decreases. The tenant's rent will have to go down when the energy costs go down.

There are some protections and improvements in here for landlords too. We heard from landlords when we were out there across the province, and one of the things that they told us was that when a tenant wilfully damages their unit—punching a hole in the wall and things like that—they want to get that tenant out of there as quickly as they can, because they're afraid that tenant is going to continue to damage the unit. There's a real problem there: They have to go through a whole long process before that tenant can go out. So we're providing a fast-track process to allow landlords to get those tenants out. If there are other tenants who are involved or who are living in nearby units, it's going to benefit those tenants as well. It's very, very important that we move on to committee so that we can debate this legislation and so that that good protection for landlords and good tenants will get in there as well.

The changes also benefit small landlords; there are a lot of small landlords out there. We heard a number of things from them. They were concerned about the costs of applications before the tribunal. Those costs are going to be diminished as a result of this legislation. Small landlords are going to benefit in that respect.

They're also concerned because many landlords rent out units to tenants within their own house. That's a good thing: It provides a base of affordable housing for us right across the province. If a tenant impacts on the reasonable enjoyment of that landlord's home, then the landlord will be able to apply for a fast-track eviction, as they should, because it's important. Just because you're renting a unit out to a tenant doesn't mean that your quality of life should be diminished as a result. That's fair to landlords. There may be other tenants involved in those units to whom it will also be fair.



The legislation before us is fair and balanced. We're looking forward to taking it to committee so that we can hear more from landlords and tenants to ensure that we've got it completely right. We think we've got a fair and balanced piece of legislation. We've worked very hard on it. It has taken some extra time to get this right.

The member from Trinity-Spadina talked about the vacancy rate. He made this insinuation: During a five-year period of time, from the beginning to the end, vacancy rates went up, and the fact that rents also went up during that period of time means that the vacancy rates going up doesn't mean rents come down.

What he didn't tell the public in his speech today was that in the last two years, the vacancy rates have been coming down. Prior to that, they weren't. The last two years is when the vacancy rates have been coming down. Lo and behold, in the last two years rents have been static or they've risen very, very slightly, below the rate of inflation. That means when the vacancy rates are up, rents, for the most part, are either static or, if they're going up, they're going up just below the rate of inflation. That's healthy; that means a healthy rental market. That's why we've brought in this balanced piece of legislation, because for the sake of landlords and, in particular, tenants, we don't want to mess up a healthy rental market. We want to make sure that what we bring forward will ensure that landlords continue to invest in rental housing in this province, not only building new rental housing but investing in the maintenance of their housing.

Within this legislation, we've brought in greater protection for tenants to ensure that landlords have to invest in the maintenance of their units, because if they don't, tenants will now have the option to apply to the tribunal and have their rents frozen—both the guideline and above-guideline increases. There'll be a financial incentive for landlords to ensure that they maintain those units, maintain them well and see that there are not serious maintenance deficiencies. Otherwise, they're going to lose money, they're not going to be able to increase their rents, and tenants, as a result, have greater protection.

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As I said, there are many other protections in this legislation, but it provides tenants with the best level of protection they've had in this province in well over a decade. I know that tenants want us to get on with this debate. I know tenants want us to get this bill to committee where they can have a further say, and I know tenants want us to get this bill passed in the Legislature by the summer so they can get these protections in place. They've been waiting a long time for this bill. The bill is now before us, and it's fair and balanced. I'm proud of it. I think the government is humble in what we're bringing forward, but we're proud of what we're bringing forward, because we know it's in the best interests of tenants.

I thank you and look forward to continued debate.

**Mr. Frank Klees (Oak Ridges):** I'm pleased to join this debate on this voluminous piece of legislation. What we are to debate here during this time is the motion

before us which relates to this legislation. Just for the purpose of those who are observing the proceedings here, I want them to know why we are debating not the bill, because the bill is not before the House, but we are debating a motion by Mr. Bradley, the House leader for the government. It is a motion that effectively short circuits the legislative process.

The way that this House should work, and I think the way that most people expect this House to work, is that we have before us a piece of legislation and members participate in the debate to speak to the essence of the legislation before us. That would take a reasonable period of time, and any member who chooses to speak to that legislation on behalf of his constituents should have the right to do so and would bring forward items for consideration by the government that perhaps, in the drafting of the legislation, they haven't considered or contemplated. Surely that's the reason why we come to this place as members. However, the government has chosen not to respect the right of individual members of this House to have their say on the legislation.

So Mr. Bradley, as the Liberal government House leader, moved this motion that is before the House now, and it reads as follows:

"That, pursuant to standing order 46 and notwithstanding any other standing order or special order of the House relating to Bill 109, An Act to revise the law governing residential tenancies, when Bill 109 is next called as a government order, the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of the second reading stage of the bill without further debate or amendment and at such time the bill shall be ordered referred to the standing committee on general government."

The motion goes on to say the following:

"That the committee shall report the bill to the House not later than Thursday, June 8, 2006. In the event that the committee fails to report the bill on that day, the bill shall be deemed to be passed by the committee and shall be deemed to be reported to and received by the House."

I'm sure that members of the public who are looking on must be scratching their heads and saying, "Wait a minute. Are you saying that what the government is doing by way of this motion is pushing this bill through the Legislature, notwithstanding the fact that members of this House, be they Liberal, NDP or Progressive Conservative, would want to make a point and add their contribution to this debate?"

Notwithstanding that, this government, this House leader, no doubt under the direction of Dalton McGuinty, said to add this part to your motion: "That, regardless of what the committee has decided, regardless of who we have heard from or, by the way, regardless of what members of the public want to come forward and make their contribution to the committee, that notwithstanding any of that, the bill will be reported to the House no later than June 8." That's a couple of weeks down the road. In the event that the committee fails to report, the bill will be deemed to have been reported. It goes on to say:



"That, upon receiving the report of the standing committee on general government, the Speaker shall put the question for adoption of the report forthwith, and at such time the bill shall be ordered for third reading which order may be called on that same day; and

"That, on the day the order for third reading for the bill is called, the time available for debate up to 5:50 p.m. or 9:20 p.m., as the case may be, shall be apportioned equally among the recognized parties."

On one hand, regardless of how much additional input the public may want on this bill, the government will deem that this bill has been passed. It will allow a couple of hours of debate until the end of the day, regardless of how much debate may be required based on what took place in committee.

Then, "That there shall be no deferral of any vote allowed pursuant to standing order 28(h)." So even that part of the procedure in this place, the House leader and his government have decided to turn on its head.

Finally, "In the case of any division relating to any proceedings on the bill, the division bell shall be limited to 10 minutes." He's not even going to allow a normal 30-minute bell so that members in the Legislature have an opportunity to come in and to cast their vote.

I know the Clerk can't even enter into this discussion with me and he can't even, by any indication, signal that he would. He himself is confounded by what's taking place here in terms of the usurping of the standing orders. But I know what he's thinking, because as someone who respects Parliament, as someone who respects how business should be done within our parliamentary system, he must be confounded by the way this Liberal government is conducting its business.

I know, Speaker, you are very concerned, because your responsibility is to ensure that business is done in an orderly way here, but this government is taking away the privilege of every member in this House to debate this very substantive piece of legislation. I believe the electorate will remember that. This is a government that has disrespect for the electorate. It has demonstrated that very clearly by having made hundreds of promises during an election campaign. Once they were elected, they forgot the promises and they do as they choose to do. Now, through closure motion, they disrespect the members of this very place. They will be judged for their actions. It's regrettable that we've come to this in the Legislature of Ontario.

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**Mr. Mario Sergio (York West):** I'm delighted to join the debate at this particular hour.

First, let me say I truly want to congratulate every member of the House, especially those from the opposition benches, who, when presented with a closure motion, have said exactly what I said and I would have said if I still were in opposition. So I don't blame them at all, because in this House, when the government has to do business, and do business in a way that is progress for the people of Ontario, it's quite normal for the opposition to jump on the bandwagon and say, "We didn't have time to

speak, to address the particular issues of the bill." Yet I have no idea which particular member spent about 20 minutes debating why the closure and forgot completely to debate the content of the bill.

**Mr. Klees:** You're not supposed to.

**Mr. Sergio:** You're not supposed to. I completely agree with the member.

Let me address the bill. I would like to add a few supportive words about our government, which has now achieved Bill 109 and brought it to the House, the proposed Residential Tenancies Act, 2006.

As parliamentary assistant for housing, I am pleased that we are moving forward on our agenda to improve housing choices for Ontarians and, with this legislation, make rental housing in Ontario much fairer. The proposed legislation is not simply about improving Ontario's rental housing policies; it's about improving people's lives. It adds another piece to our integrated housing strategy to improve the availability, affordability and quality of housing across our province.

As Minister Gerretsen mentioned, we are making progress with our integrated housing policy. Together with our municipal and federal partners, the Canada-Ontario affordable housing program has funded to date 5,450 rental and supportive housing units, 938 home ownership units and 200 units under our northern housing component. We are also helping families afford housing through rent supplements. To date, the rent supplement program is assisting some 6,670 low-income households.

We have also taken action to help families in short-term rental arrears avoid eviction through the \$14-million rent bank program. Since 2004, provincially funded rent banks have helped some 4,177 Ontario households avoid eviction and keep their homes.

The proposed Residential Tenancies Act would take a further step in helping Ontario families by doing what the Tenant Protection Act has never done before: offering real protection to tenants while promoting investment in the rental housing market.

Many of my constituents are tenants. Sometimes we debate, we challenge ourselves in this House, and we challenge ourselves even as members of our own caucus: Who has the most tenants? I say, "You know, folks, I represent the wonderful area of Jane and Finch, the four corners, the four corridors, and I think I have the most tenants." Then another member says, "No, no. I have the most tenants." Well, maybe so, but I think I have the most senior and low-income rentals in perhaps the entire GTA, and I'm very proud. The reason that I have no problem walking into my community and supporting this bill is because I have not received one concern saying that this bill is unfair and unjust to the tenants in my area. When I speak on behalf of my tenants, let me say that they are vociferous when something doesn't appeal to them. So I'm very proud to walk into my area and present this particular bill. I know first-hand the challenges tenants have faced under the current act.

Maintenance is an ongoing issue for many tenants in my riding and in some of the other ridings as well.



Tenants have the right to live in a clean, well-maintained building regardless of income. Of course, landlords should be able to make a fair return on their investment as well. Our government is achieving a balance between the interests of landlords and tenants with the proposed Residential Tenancies Act. Under Bill 109, both tenants and landlords would be properly protected. Tenants would have fairer rent increases and better-maintained buildings. Landlords would be offered incentives to invest in and maintain their buildings. And both would have better protection from bad landlords and bad tenants, respectively.

This bill would also encourage investment so that we would continue to have a sustainable supply of well-maintained rental housing.

The proposed legislation is balanced and fair, and it's not just our government that thinks this. Canaccord Adams released a report on May 4, 2006, commenting that the proposed legislation would not impact investment that large investors like CAP REIT and InterRent are making in our rental market.

The city of Toronto represents half of the Ontario tenant population. Toronto Mayor David Miller had these words to say about Bill 109: "The current legislation is very anti-tenant and there are significant improvements in the proposed legislation that will increase tenants' rights and make the system much, much fairer for them."

The Toronto Star, in its May 5 editorial, stated that our proposed new rental rules find the right balance: "The proposed Residential Tenancies Act is a reasonable compromise that rolls back some of the excesses of the previous Conservative government, while protecting the health of the residential rental market."

Passage of Bill 109 would be an important step in our commitment to building stronger communities across our province. It does what it aims to do: protect both tenants and landlords while promoting a healthy, vital rental housing market. I urge members of the Legislature to pass Bill 109 and help to build stronger communities that will make our province even stronger.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I thank you for the time.

**Mr. Tascona:** I'm certainly pleased to speak on this bill for the time that I have. I remember that when the legislation was brought in by the PC government back in 1995, vacancy rates were low, rents were increasing, and we hadn't had an increase in the rental stock in many, many years. Today, based on the information provided by the government, Ontario's vacancy rate is high. In 2005 the rate was 3.7%, and it is projected to remain high until 2009.

As well, vacancy rates are highest at the low end of the market. In Toronto, the 2005 vacancy rate for the least expensive apartments, the lowest 20% of the housing market, was 5.5%. At the same time, average rents are static or falling, increasing by only 0.7% in 2005, and, for the least expensive units, as above, the 2005 average rent was just \$1 above the 2004 average.

The purpose of the bill that was set forth to get the housing market better for tenants has achieved what it

was supposed to achieve, and yet here we have the Liberal government bringing in a change of the rules when the market has responded and provided more rental stock, a more stable environment and more choice for tenants. The Liberals are doing that because it's part of their philosophy. The philosophy of the Liberals is, "If you have an industry that is doing well, regulate it, then tax it to death, and then subsidize it." That's their philosophy with respect to business.

What this bill is going to do—because the Minister of Municipal Affairs really doesn't understand what's going on out there with respect to the rental market, and the housing market in particular—is kill the condo market as we know it in this province. The condo market right now is not as stable as it should be, but this bill will certainly make sure that the condo market in this province is dead. It will also make sure that any incentive to go into new apartment construction is going to be non-existent, because this bill is going to ensure that landlords have no interest in making sure that there's more housing stock out in the market, which was the purpose of the bill that was brought forth by the PC government back in the 1990s. The Liberals are changing the rules, as they always do, to make sure that they can achieve what they want to do, which is anti-business legislation here.

#### 2100

You want to talk about fair tenancy? The minister from Kingston is a lawyer. You've got to look at this thing. I went to Queen's law school and I was a tenant in Kingston. I was looking tonight at one of the biggest jokes I've seen on this bill. It's based on the Liberal policy, and it says:

"Utilities—Fair Treatment for Tenants: The current act does not contain provisions to reverse rent increases for higher utility costs, if prices later decrease. This means tenants may continue to pay higher rents long after utility costs have declined." What planet are we on? Has anyone ever seen utility costs decreasing in this province, especially under the Liberal government? People are paying more for natural gas, people are paying more for electricity. If you think you're going to get a decrease in utility costs, you've got another think coming. But under this proposed legislation—because this is just a sham—it says, "Sitting tenants whose rents were increased would receive rent reductions when utility costs decrease, if their landlords had received an above-guideline increase for higher utility costs." Everybody in this province knows that utility costs are not going down, they're going up, and they're going to stay up under this government. Every six months the Ontario Energy Board is going to look at the price of electricity and natural gas, and you know as well as I do that in one way or another, natural gas and electricity costs are going up in this province. So that's a really great provision, Minister: "I'm going to protect you against lower utility costs." That would be nice if it happened, but it isn't going to happen under this government.

Regarding the bill, they say, "We're balancing what's going on with respect to landlords and tenants, because



we're going to make sure you get a hearing if you get an eviction order." Well, whoop-de-do, you're going to get a hearing. What is going to happen to the landlord with a tenant who's not paying the rent, who has handed them an eviction order but they still don't pay, and then they have to deal with them down at the Landlord and Tenant Board? There's got to be some fairness and recognition with respect to both sides of the equation. If a party is served with the notice and knows they're going to be evicted, what are we doing, when they fail to honour the eviction notice, saying, "You're going to have a hearing," or, "You're going to have a mediation, because we think you should have that?"

Talk about a joke with respect to protecting tenants' rights. What tenants want is fair rent and that the building is kept in good condition. They want a place to live with their families that they can say is a fair and a safe place to rent. That's what they want, and they want choice, and that's what they were given under the PC bill back in the 1990s, because what we accomplished is exactly what they're trying to kill. They want to make sure that the vacancy rates are tight and that the rents are going up. How do you do that? You make sure that the housing stock decreases.

It's a very sad day for the housing market in this province with respect to this bill. The Liberals know exactly what they're doing. They're going to kill the condo market and they're going to kill the new building construction market for apartments. They're going to do it by saying, "Oh, we're balancing." Who else would say, "We're balancing it down the middle for you"? Only a Liberal would say that. They have no solution in terms of how to deal with this, because they want to change the rules in the middle of the game. It's not fair to people who invest in this business and it's not fair to tenants, because the choice is going down and the rents are going up.

**Hon. Mr. Gerretsen:** Let me start by saying that this has been a very difficult topic to deal with, as it was difficult to deal with for governments over the last 31 years. You may recall that rent control was first brought in by Bill Davis back in 1975 as the result of an accord he reached with the NDP at the time. Ever since, there have been struggles about how to deal with the rental market and what controls, if any, there should be.

I can tell you that we first of all did an extensive amount of consultation on this. My parliamentary assistant, Brad Duguid, went to at least 10 different cities, listened to literally hundreds of deputations on all sides of the issue—landlords, tenants, mobile homeowners, people who lived in care homes, etc. Those are the provisions, by the way, that we haven't dealt with at all in any of the discussions to the changes we're making: the rights that people who own their own mobile homes will now have that they didn't have before with respect to the mobile units they live in on somebody else's property, the park owner's property. It's the same thing with respect to people who live in care homes. What happens if the particular kind of care is no longer required for

them? What happens to the various costs they can be charged for? I think that those groups, which aren't the main groups we're talking about, will be extremely happy.

I don't even want to talk about the time allocation aspect of this motion. I realize that a government should not be doing this, and in a perfect world, you wouldn't be doing this. On the other hand, I know we learned a great lesson from the last government on that. I understand from the records that they time-allocated on about 75% of all the matters that came before this House during the Eves days, and before that, during the Harris days, it was over 50%. So they don't have to give anybody any lessons about time allocation motions.

As has already been mentioned, this bill has been debated here for three solid days for upwards of 8 to 9 hours. It really is time to get the bill out into committee, to hear from the different groups before the legislative committee and to make any amendments that may be necessary. This government is always open to good ideas, good suggestions made during the legislative hearing process and to translate that into amendments that will make a bill better. So we look forward to that approach.

Let me just deal with some of the main aspects of the bill that I think are really going to help both good landlords and good tenants. Those are the people, after all, who need the protection. They need protection from bad landlords and bad tenants. It sounds like a very simple thing to say, but that's the reality of the situation. That's why we put laws into effect to basically deal with the relationship between these two groups.

Let's deal with the whole notion of vacancy control first of all. I will be the first to admit, and I think we all realize, that there has been a tremendous change in the vacancy rates of apartments clear across this province over the last three to four years. CMHC keeps very accurate statistics of this on an ongoing basis in something like 50 housing markets, different communities in this province. In just about each and every one of them, if not in every one of them, over the last three to four years the vacancy rate has been anywhere between 3% to 5% or 6%. That goes for all units on the market, from units at the lower end of the rental market to units at the higher end. As a matter of fact, for the Toronto rental market, in the lowest 20%, the lowest quintile, where the average going-in rent is about \$725, we currently have the highest vacancy rate anywhere in Ontario of something like 5.5%; last year it was 5.1%. It's the same thing for Ottawa: In the lowest quintile, the vacancy rate currently is 4.6%, last year it was 4.9%, and the year before that it was 3%. You could just go on and on. That is the reality of the situation.

We can all argue about how this came about and why there is such a large vacancy rate. There are probably a lot of reasons for that. Number one, CMHC has made it a lot easier for young couples to own their own homes; the down payment required is a lot less than it used to be. Certainly mortgage interest rates are a lot less. There is a



whole variety of reasons, and you can't really point to any one, as to why vacancy rates are high. But the reality is that they are high, and as a result of that high vacancy rate, the going-in rents haven't gone up by any amount at all.

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Look, for example, at the lowest 20% quintile in the city of Toronto. In 2003, the average going-in rent was \$725, in 2004 it was \$725, and in 2005 it was \$726. In Ottawa, the going-in rate in 2003 was \$625, in 2004 it was \$624, and in 2005 it was \$623. CMHC has determined—and they are, after all, the leaders in this field in terms of statistics for housing in this country—that they expect these vacancy rates to remain at these levels, if not higher, for at least the next three to four years. So the rental market is working as far as the going-in rate is concerned, and people do have choices.

I know my friends, particularly within the NDP, will say, "How about the people at the really low end of the rental market, people with limited incomes?" Yes, they have a major problem. I'll be the first to admit that. That is precisely why we put into place programs such as the affordable housing program, whereby charitable groups, non-profit groups, for-profit groups, can in effect create new affordable housing, and they're doing so right now in the market. We have set up a housing allowance program where we're trying to work with the landlords to utilize the vacant units out there to assist the individuals who need help, who are at the low end of the economic scale, so they will in effect be given a housing allowance to rent units that they otherwise couldn't afford. There are many of these people in the province, and I don't for a moment deny that.

I'll go even further than that. Within our ministry, we are disappointed that all these various programs, which were basically a result of the agreement we signed with the federal government last year, just about a year ago last week, for some \$700 million in our affordable housing program—we're disappointed that there hasn't been greater take-up on that, more quickly, across the province. You've got to remember that nowadays, as a result of the changes that were made to so-called downloading of social housing, particularly to the local level, all the housing programs that the ministry offers, that the government offers, are being administered through the local housing service providers, basically the housing departments of the various municipalities out there. We have by now signed a contract and an agreement with each and every one of these housing providers to get out both the affordable housing program—in other words, where they go out and deal with the different groups to build the new affordable housing etc.—and the housing allowance programs so the housing providers will go out and deal with the landlords that have excess units so the low-income individuals can take advantage of those particular programs. We hope that over the next little while there will be a much greater take-up on the program.

There were some numbers thrown around here earlier that only 63 units have been built. Quite frankly, that's

absolute nonsense. So far, under the Canada-Ontario affordable housing program, we have funded 5,450 rental and supportive housing units, 938 home ownership units and 200 units under the northern housing component. The rent supplement program in the housing allowance program is helping some 6,670 low-income households already. And those numbers will increase. The money is there and we want to get that funding out as quickly as possible.

Time is always moving on quickly. Let me just talk about some of the major benefits of the new legislation that we have here.

The first item is this idea that a tenant cannot be evicted without a hearing. The reality is that under the current law, a tenant can be given notice, for non-payment of rent, to appear at a hearing some 10 or 12 days from the date that tenant is served, and if that tenant has not filed a notice of dispute or whatever within five days of the date they are served, an eviction order can be issued. We have the situation where an eviction order in effect can be issued before the hearing date set out in the notice that the tenant gets. It is unfair, simply unfair, for that to happen. We're basically saying that in any landlord-tenant relationship, obviously the landlord is entitled to the rent, but the tenant is also entitled to a unit that is in a good state of repair and maintenance. If a landlord brings in an application for non-payment of rent and that tenant can bring up issues with respect to maintenance, repairs, work orders that have been ignored by the landlord or have simply not been looked after, there is a set-off with respect to that. The main thing we have done in this piece of legislation is to say that all of those issues that affect the landlord and tenant relationship should be dealt with at the same time. That is the fair way to deal with it. Of course, in most court cases that's what happens currently. In most court cases between two individuals, whether small claims court or a higher court level, the issues that come out of the same relationship are dealt with at the same time. We are saying that's exactly what should happen in this situation as well.

With respect to capital improvements to a building or utilities costs, which were spoken about earlier, we're simply saying this: If a landlord applies for an above-guideline increase as a result of capital improvements the landlord has made to a tenant's premises—putting in a new kitchen, maybe doing something else that is really a capital improvement to that unit—once that cost has been paid for by the tenant in the increased rent on an amortized basis, then that amount should come off the rent. We heard over and over from tenants that they feel very strongly about this. We agree with them on that.

We've said the same thing with respect to utilities costs. I totally disagree with what the last member said: There are times when utility costs do go down, particularly as smart meters get placed in the units. By the way, the smart meters are going to be paid for by the utility companies so we all pay for it in our rates; it's not going to be paid for by the individual tenant who has the unit installed within their apartment. We're saying that



once a smart meter is in place and has operated for a year so you've got something to compare it to with respect to the bulk rate the landlord was paying before, only then will the tenant be obligated, in a lot of cases, to pay the smart meter costs and have that amount deducted from the rent so that the tenant will not be paying anymore. Obviously, if the tenant is more energy-conscious than the previous tenant, they're going to pay less in total rent and utility costs than the previous tenant would have.

I notice that my time is quickly running out. There's so much more to say about this bill that we're bringing forward. The rules for both good landlords and good tenants are definitely improved under this bill. We look forward to the debate that will take place before committee. We look forward to hearing from all the deputations of people from all sides of this issue. If there are some good ideas that come out of that that will make this particular bill better, I assure you that those ideas will be taken into account by way of amendments.

I urge all members of this House to support this bill, because it's good for both landlords and tenants.

**The Acting Speaker:** Mr Bradley has moved government notice of motion number 153. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 10-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 2119 to 2129.*

**The Acting Speaker:** All those in favour of the motion will please rise one at a time and be counted by the Clerk.

#### Ayes

Arthurs, Wayne	Mauro, Bill	Racco, Mario G.
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	McMeekin, Ted	Ramal, Khalil
Bradley, James J.	McNeely, Phil	Rinaldi, Lou
Chambers, Mary Anne V.	Milloy, John	Ruprecht, Tony
Delaney, Bob	Mitchell, Carol	Sandals, Liz
Dombrowsky, Leona	Oraziotti, David	Sergio, Mario
Duguid, Brad	Peters, Steve	Smith, Monique
Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Peterson, Tim	Van Bommel, Maria
Gerretsen, John	Pupatello, Sandra	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Levac, Dave	Qaadri, Shafiq	Zimmer, David

**The Acting Speaker:** All those opposed to the motion will please rise one at a time and be counted by the Clerk.

#### Nays

Barrett, Toby	Miller, Norm	Tascona, Joseph N.
Klees, Frank	Runciman, Robert W.	Yakubuski, John
Marchese, Rosario	Tabuns, Peter	

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Claude L. DesRosiers):** The ayes are 30; the nays are 8.

**The Acting Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

It being past 9:30 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 1:30 p.m.

*The House adjourned at 2131.*



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO**  
**ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO**

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Hon. / L'hon. James K. Bartleman  
Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Michael A. Brown  
Clerk / Greffier: Claude L. DesRosiers  
Deputy Clerk / Sous-greffière: Deborah Deller  
Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman  
Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti	Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti
Algoma-Manitoulin	<b>Brown, Hon. / L'hon. Michael A. (L)</b> Speaker / Président	Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant	Barrett, Toby (PC)
Ancaster-Dundas- Flamborough-Aldershot	McMeekin, Ted (L)	Haliburton-Victoria-Brock	Scott, Laurie (PC)
Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford	<b>Tascona, Joseph N. (PC)</b> Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième Vice-Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative	Halton	Chudleigh, Ted (PC)
Beaches-East York / Beaches-York-Est	Prue, Michael (ND)	Hamilton East / Hamilton-Est	Horwath, Andrea (ND)
Bramalea-Gore-Malton- Springdale	Kular, Kuldip (L)	Hamilton Mountain	<b>Bountrogianni, Hon. / L'hon. Marie (L)</b> Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, minister responsible for democratic renewal / ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales, ministre responsable du Renouveau démocratique
Brampton Centre / Brampton-Centre	Jeffrey, Linda (L)	Hamilton West / Hamilton-Ouest	Marsales, Judy (L)
Brampton West-Mississauga / Brampton-Ouest-Mississauga	Dhillon, Vic (L)	Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington	<b>Dombrowsky, Hon. / L'hon. Leona (L)</b> Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Brant	Levac, Dave (L)	Huron-Bruce	Mitchell, Carol (L)
Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound	Murdoch, Bill (PC)	Kenora-Rainy River	Hampton, Howard (ND) Leader of the New Democratic Party / chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Burlington	Jackson, Cameron (PC)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les îles	<b>Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (L)</b> Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Cambridge	Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Milloy, John (L)
Chatham-Kent Essex	Hoy, Pat (L)	Kitchener-Waterloo	Witmer, Elizabeth (PC)
Davenport	Ruprecht, Tony (L)	Lambton-Kent-Middlesex	Van Bommel, Maria (L)
Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	<b>Caplan, Hon. / L'hon. David (L)</b> Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal, Deputy government House leader / ministre du Renouvellement de l'infrastructure publique, leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement t	Lanark-Carleton	Sterling, Norman W. (PC)
Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Wynne, Kathleen O. (L)	Leeds-Grenville	Runciman, Robert W. (PC)
Dufferin-Peel- Wellington-Grey	Tory, John (PC) Leader of the Opposition / chef de l'opposition	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Matthews, Deborah (L)
Durham	O'Toole, John (PC)	London West / London-Ouest	<b>Bentley, Hon. / L'hon. Christopher (L)</b> Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Eglinton-Lawrence	<b>Colle, Hon. / L'hon. Mike (L)</b> Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / ministre des Affaires civiles et de l'Immigration	London-Fanshawe	Ramal, Khalil (L)
Elgin-Middlesex-London	<b>Peters, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (L)</b> Minister of Labour / ministre du Travail	Markham	Wong, Tony C. (L)
Erie-Lincoln	Hudak, Tim (PC)	Mississauga Centre / Mississauga-Centre	<b>Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (L)</b> Minister of Transportation / ministre des Transports
Essex	<b>Crozier, Bruce (L)</b> Deputy Speaker, Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Vice-Président, Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative	Mississauga East / Mississauga-Est	Fonseca, Peter (L)
Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	<b>Cansfield, Hon. / L'hon. Donna H. (L)</b> Minister of Energy / ministre de l'Énergie	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Peterson, Tim (L)
Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	Qaadri, Shafiq (L)	Mississauga West / Mississauga-Ouest	Delaney, Bob (L)
Etobicoke-Lakeshore	<b>Broten, Hon. / L'hon. Laurel C. (L)</b> Minister of the Environment / ministre de l'Environnement	Nepean-Carleton	MacLeod, Lisa (PC)
Glengarry-Prescott-Russell	Lalonde, Jean-Marc (L)	Niagara Centre / Niagara-Centre	Kormos, Peter (ND)
Guelph-Wellington	Sandals, Liz (L)	Niagara Falls	Craiton, Kim (L)



Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti	Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti
Nickel Belt	Martel, Shelley (ND)	St. Paul's	<b>Bryant, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (L)</b> Attorney General / procureur général
Nipissing	Smith, Monique M. (L)	Stoney Creek	Mossop, Jennifer F. (L)
Northumberland	Rinaldi, Lou (L)	Stormont-Dundas- Charlottenburgh	Brownell, Jim (L)
Oak Ridges	Klees, Frank (PC)	Sudbury	<b>Bartolucci, Hon. / L'hon. Rick (L)</b> Minister of Northern Development and Mines / ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Oakville	Flynn, Kevin Daniel (L)	Thornhill	Racco, Mario G. (L)
Oshawa	Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Thunder Bay-Atikokan	Mauro, Bill (L)
Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	Patten, Richard (L)	Thunder Bay-Superior North / Thunder Bay-Superior- Nord	Gravelle, Michael (L)
Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	<b>McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (L)</b> Premier and President of the Executive Council, Minister of Research and Innovation / premier ministre et président du Conseil exécutif, ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation	Timiskaming-Cochrane	<b>Ramsay, Hon. / L'hon. David (L)</b> Minister of Natural Resources, minister responsible for Aboriginal Affairs / ministre des Richesses naturelles, ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones Bisson, Gilles (ND)
Ottawa West-Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest-Nepean	<b>Watson, Hon. / L'hon. Jim (L)</b> Minister of Health Promotion / ministre de la Promotion de la santé McNeely, Phil (L)	Timmins-James Bay / Timmins-Baie James	<b>Smitherman, Hon. / L'hon. George (L)</b> Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée Tabuns, Peter (ND)
Ottawa-Orléans	<b>Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (L)</b> Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for francophone affairs / ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires, ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones	Toronto Centre-Rosedale / Toronto-Centre-Rosedale	<b>Arnott, Ted (PC)</b> First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier Vice-Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative Elliott, Christine (PC)
Ottawa-Vanier	Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Toronto-Danforth	Zimmer, David (L)
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Parkdale-High Park	Miller, Norm (PC)	Vaughan-King-Aurora	<b>Duncan, Hon. / L'hon. Dwight (L)</b> Minister of Finance, Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / ministre des Finances, président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement
Parry Sound-Muskoka	Wilkinson, John (L)	Waterloo-Wellington	<b>Kwinter, Hon. / L'hon. Monte (L)</b> Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels
Perth-Middlesex	Leal, Jeff (L)	Whitby-Ajax	Munro, Julia (PC)
Peterborough	Arthurs, Wayne (L)	Willowdale	<b>Cordiano, Hon. / L'hon. Joseph (L)</b> Minister of Economic Development and Trade / ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce
Pickering-Ajax-Uxbridge	Parsons, Ernie (L)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	Sergio, Mario (L)
Prince Edward-Hastings	Yakabuski, John (PC)	Windsor-St. Clair	
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Sault Ste. Marie	Duguid, Brad (L)	York South-Weston / York-Sud-Weston	
Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	<b>Chambers, Hon. / L'hon. Mary Anne V. (L)</b> Minister of Children and Youth Services / ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse	York West / York-Ouest	
Scarborough East / Scarborough-Est	Berardinetti, Lorenzo (L)		
Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	<b>Phillips, Hon. / L'hon. Gerry (L)</b> Minister of Government Services / ministre des Services gouvernementaux		
Scarborough-Agincourt	Balkissoon, Bas (L)		
Scarborough-Rouge River	Dunlop, Garfield (PC)		
Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	Wilson, Jim (PC)		
Simcoe-Grey	<b>Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (L)</b> Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, Government House Leader / ministre du Tourisme, ministre délégué aux Affaires des personnes âgées, leader parlementaire du gouvernement		
St. Catharines			

A list arranged by members' surnames and including all responsibilities of each member appears in the first and last issues of each session and on the first Monday of each month.

Une liste alphabétique des noms des députés, comprenant toutes les responsabilités de chaque député, figure dans les premier et dernier numéros de chaque session et le premier lundi de chaque mois.



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Norman W. Sterling, Kathleen O.Wynne  
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No. 78



N° 78

ISSN 1180-2987

## Legislative Assembly of Ontario

Second Session, 38<sup>th</sup> Parliament

## Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

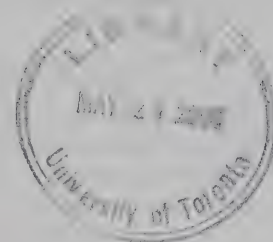
Deuxième session, 38<sup>e</sup> législature

# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

# Journal des débats (Hansard)

Wednesday 17 May 2006

Mercredi 17 mai 2006



Speaker  
Honourable Michael A. Brown

Président  
L'honorable Michael A. Brown

Clerk  
Claude L. DesRosiers

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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 17 May 2006

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 17 mai 2006

*The House met at 1330.  
Prayers.*

### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

#### PHARMACISTS

**Ms. Laurie Scott (Haliburton–Victoria–Brock):**

Yesterday, the Coalition of Ontario Pharmacy was here at Queen's Park to sound the alarm about Bill 102. The coalition, of which 80% of Ontario pharmacies are members, warns that the McGuinty Liberals' drug reforms will wreak havoc on Ontario's community pharmacies despite a proposed payment plan for cognitive services. Pharmacies in Ontario, and ultimately Ontarians, are going to lose as a result of these reforms. These reforms mean Ontarians are once again being made to pay more and get less.

The coalition warns that as a result of these reforms and the government's refusal to adequately reimburse pharmacists for the cost of their services, as many as 300 pharmacies in Ontario will close. They warn that the ones that do stay open will be forced to lay off staff and they'll be forced to reduce their hours of operation. Due to staff layoffs, pharmacists will have less time to answer medication-related questions, meaning that Ontarians will have to go to walk-in clinics or emergency rooms for answers. Pharmacists will actually lose money if they stock expensive drugs for conditions like cancer, HIV/AIDS and multiple sclerosis.

My office has been inundated with letters from pharmacists in my riding who have written to express their concerns with this government's ill-thought-out plan to reform the drug system in Ontario. I heard from a Kash Eshkour, a pharmacist at the Kinmount Pharmacy. He says that your plan will ultimately "compromise the sustainability and viability of a community pharmacy." I heard from Ramesh Chotai, a pharmacist in Coboconk. He has been in business for 26 years, and he's concerned about the viability of his business if you ram the bill through the Legislature. I also heard from Amin Shivji, a pharmacist from Haliburton, who says, "A pharmacy driven out of business because it is unable to afford to dispense—

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Thank you.

#### ENERGY POLICIES

**Mr. Peter Tabuns (Toronto–Danforth):** The Premier talks about making Ontario a North American

leader in conservation and efficiency, and it's evident by his speeches that he has adopted that as a slogan. But it's also evident from his actions that he is going to be marginalizing conservation and efficiency, that it's going to be a sideshow in his approach to energy in this province.

He is not showing the leadership of investing in a suite of conservation and efficiency programs that have been successfully employed in other jurisdictions to reduce energy use. In Manitoba and Quebec, our neighbours, they have well-established programs to retrofit residential homes to make them more energy efficient.

Quebec, to date, has been topping off the rebates to homeowners who have renovated their homes through having an energy audit. The federal Tories just recently cut this successful program in their budget. Quebec, according to federal officials, has indicated that it will continue the funding of this program at the provincial level.

In contrast, here in Ontario there has just been silence.

I propose that the Premier follow the lead of his Liberal cousins in Quebec and, instead of engaging in a hollow spin war with the federal Tories on this program, that he bring that EnerGuide program back into Ontario and put us on the path to becoming a leader in conservation and sustainable energy.

#### OFFICE OF THE MINING AND LANDS COMMISSIONER

**Ms. Monique M. Smith (Nipissing):** It's a pleasure for me to rise in the House today to honour the 100th anniversary of the Office of the Mining and Lands Commissioner. This is a significant milestone.

The roots of the office reach back to the early days of mining in this province and to a flurry of staking activity in Cobalt, Ontario. When silver was discovered in Cobalt just after the turn of the last century, the government of James Whitney was required to deal with escalating public demand to stake-claiming.

In 1905, a mining convention was held in this very building. A whole range of proposed mining regulations came forward from delegates and many found their way into the Mines Act of 1906. One regulation in particular would stand out: the appointment of a Mining Commissioner to decide disputes. Over the years, as changes were made to mining and other development legislation, the roles, responsibilities and title of the commissioner changed. In 1973, the Mining Commissioner became the Mining and Lands Commissioner.



Since 1973, the commissioner's jurisdiction has expanded beyond the Mining Act and now also includes matters related to the Conservation Authorities Act; the Oil, Gas and Salt Resources Act; the Lakes and Rivers Improvement Act; the Assessment Act; and the Aggregate Resources Act. These are all acts and programs administered by the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines.

In dealing with issues referred to it for consideration, the office continues to use progressive case management and alternative dispute resolution measures.

Throughout the 100-year history we have had only seven commissioners, and the province has been well served by the able public servants who have filled that important role, including our current commissioner, Linda Kamerman, and her able staff.

The Office of the Mining and Lands Commissioner has played a vital role in providing continuity and stability for mining exploration and development in our resource-rich province—

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Thank you.

#### FOOD SAFETY

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod (Nepean–Carleton):** Inconsistent, aggressive and excessive—that is how the rural people of Nepean–Carleton, eastern Ontario and throughout this entire province feel about the Smitherman scheme to control jams, jellies and pies sold at our local roadside food stands and farmers' markets.

They are worried about the new regulations and what they will spell for church suppers like those in North Gower, Greely and Richmond. They fear next on the attack list in our rural institutions will be church picnics, school bake sales and hockey team fundraisers.

They are justifiably concerned that this is another attempt by this Liberal government and its urban attitude to attack the rural way of life, rural customs and everything that is wholesome in our rural communities. They think the Smitherman scheme is really a solution looking for a problem.

While we all agree that there is a need for food safety, Councillor Glenn Brooks in my riding accurately states: "The devil is in the details. Basically, all prepared foods must be prepared within the food premises as approved by health inspectors." But he reminds us: "No problem, except there are many situations in which the quantity of food cannot be prepared on-site. Therein lies a serious problem ... many large church suppers will not be able to meet the fullness of the legislation."

I'd like to remind the minister that made-in-down-town-Toronto policies don't work in small-town and rural Ontario. Like Councillor Brooks says, "Conflict between rural culture and tradition and a myriad of regulations, old and new and yet to be, is creating an ever-increasing irritant. Eventually, the decision-makers' know-best attitude will stifle community initiative." He believes it is unacceptable.

#### NATIONAL DAY AGAINST HOMOPHOBIA

**Ms. Kathleen O. Wynne (Don Valley West):** I rise in the House today to recognize the National Day Against Homophobia. Initially created by a group in Montreal called Fondation Émergence, it was first recognized by the National Assembly of Quebec in 2003. This year, the city of Toronto has added its name to the list of supporters of this important day.

In its fourth year, the National Day Against Homophobia will be highlighting the need to end homophobia in our work environments. A recent survey conducted by Léger Marketing showed that over 60% of respondents believe that if gays and lesbians reveal their sexual orientation in the workplace it could be harmful to their professional career. Over half of Canadians surveyed feel that for people who openly state being gay or lesbian, it is difficult to gain acceptance by management and colleagues, as well as by clients with whom they do business.

1340

We have come a long way in Canada in accepting gays, lesbians and transgendered people as equals in our communities, but we clearly have a way to go yet. We're still dealing with the reality in Canada that rates of teen suicide are two to three times higher among gay and lesbian youth than among the rest of the population. Young same-sex couples still have to worry about finding a sympathetic neighbourhood and school. Our children from small rural communities still leave their homes to seek out the safety of the big city. Middle-aged teachers, nurses, lawyers, doctors, construction workers, police officers, firefighters, politicians, journalists, athletes, and people from all walks of life still live in the closet for fear of judgment by their co-workers and fear of limitation of their careers.

When this is no longer a reality, we will no longer need a National Day Against Homophobia. Sadly, until that time, we need this day and the awareness it brings.

#### MINISTERIAL CONDUCT

**Mr. Robert W. Runciman (Leeds–Grenville):** Over the past year, Ontarians have learned that their Attorney General has developed a habit of inserting himself into the court process when he decides it suits his purposes.

First there was the Homolka fiasco, where the Attorney General ignored the desperate advice from victims' families to put forward the strongest possible case at the first hearing. Instead of doing that, the AG did media interviews about his outrage when his own shortcomings were exposed.

Then it was his plan to gut the justice system and interfere by directing police to lay fewer charges and crowns to not oppose bail or seek custodial sentences. This duplicity and political interference was overruled by the Premier, which I confess is probably the only time Ontarians were legitimately grateful for his presence.



Recently, we know the Attorney General was involved in the Russo case, where the gross inadequacy of victims' compensation under this government was laid bare for all to see, thanks to a plea bargain that gave thugs a sentencing benefit for doing what this AG and his government have failed to do for victims.

Now we learn from legal experts that Min Chen, the heartless killer of Cecilia Zhang, may not even be deported back to China once he is eligible for parole because of his future rights here in Canada. The reason for these injustices is of course because the AG-led crown's office appears never to have sought an agreement during plea bargain negotiations to accept deportation following completion of his sentence. This leaves open the possibility of fighting deportation on the grounds of double jeopardy and applying for refugee status.

We can only hope the Premier will do all Ontarians a favour and replace this publicity pit bull before he does more damage—

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Thank you.

#### INSTITUTE FOR OUTDOOR EDUCATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES

**Mrs. Carol Mitchell (Huron-Bruce):** Last Thursday in Wiarton, I made a very important announcement on behalf of Minister Papatello at the Institute for Outdoor Education and Environmental Studies. The Bluewater District School Board and the Bluewater Education Foundation officially transferred the land to a trust to ensure that the facility will continue to be used for educational purposes, guaranteeing that the site will not be sold or used for other purposes.

This outdoor education site will allow children in the area and surrounding communities the opportunity to enjoy the benefits of an outdoor education. I would like to thank the Bluewater Education Foundation for their continuous efforts to ensure this site remained open. The success of the efforts was certainly seen at the recent sod-turning to construct a brand new kitchen, dining hall and dormitories. I wish them all the best with their future plans.

This is a very important education centre for all the people within the province of Ontario. To recognize our natural heritage is something that we from the riding of Huron-Bruce have supported and continue to support. This was a wonderful day, and I want to thank all the volunteers who have put so much work into getting this site to where it is today.

#### LONG-TERM CARE

**Mr. Jeff Leal (Peterborough):** I would like to read portions of a letter sent to the Peterborough Examiner and signed by no fewer than 19 health care providers working at Riverview Manor in Peterborough. It is written in response to a letter written by Joanne Hill and referred to in the House by the MPP for Niagara Centre.

The staff of this very reputable long-term-care facility were so outraged by Ms. Hill's letter that there's not enough time to read their letter in its entirety, but I do have copies should my esteemed colleagues want one.

"Ms. Hill has no right to speak on behalf of the care that we the employees provide to our residents.... We treat each of the residents as if they were our parents or grandparents; they are our family.

"Joanne comments on being understaffed; we have better staffing now than we have had in over five years or longer....

"Comments made by Ms. Hill regarding 'not taking residents to the bathroom' are completely false; why would we do such a thing.... Failure to toilet a resident or provide care would be considered abuse/neglect of duty.

"Comments regarding our residents not being washed in the ... morning—again, not true; our residents are provided a morning and an evening sponge bath....

"Comments regarding 'skipping the wash if residents looked fairly clean' are unfounded....

"Ms. Hill describes caring for up to 15 residents at one time; this does not occur at Riverview, nor has it. Our current ratio of PSWs to residents is approximately 9:1....

"Ms. Hill's comment regarding 'what goes on behind closed doors' is basically rubbish. If care doors in the home are closed, we are providing care.

"Ms. Hill commented that 'baby powder is used to mask smell, due to lack of care.' First of all we do not use powder in our home and secondly our home does not smell; you cannot mask odour with baby powder.

We are proud of the care that we provide to our residents and the cleanliness of our home...."

This letter was signed by 19 members of the—

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Thank you. Members' statements?

#### HEALTH CARE

**Mr. David Oraziotti (Sault Ste. Marie):** It seems we're going to spend a bit of time today correcting the record.

This past Saturday in Sault Ste. Marie, my community reaffirmed its belief in the universal public health care system. This is a fundamental Canadian value shared by our government and confirmed by our Commitment to the Future of Medicare Act, one of the first pieces of legislation our government passed.

Sault Area Hospital, like all other hospitals we are building across Ontario, will be 100% publicly owned, publicly operated and publicly accountable. Our hospitals will not be Conservative P3s, which allowed for private ownership.

Yesterday in the Legislature, the leader of the NDP continued his campaign of misinformation with the Ontario Health Coalition, by suggesting that our hospital is being privatized and claiming that we'll be diverting health care funding away from patients and into corporate profits. Irresponsible comments like these continue to



spread fear in the community, to the point where people think their OHIP is at stake.

A few weeks ago in the Sault Star, an individual said, "I have had to undergo five operations on my leg. If I had to pay for them myself I could not afford it."

All Ontarians will be able to continue to use their health cards as they always have to receive medical care.

Our record in Sault Ste. Marie is fairly clear. We're moving forward with the alternative financing and procurement strategy in order to use the resources of the private sector under the purview of public hospital boards to get back on track with building our new hospitals across the province. The irresponsible approach of the NDP will not protect us from—

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Thank you.

## REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

### STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** I beg to inform the House that today the Clerk received the report on intended appointments dated May 17, 2006, of the standing committee on government agencies. Pursuant to standing order 106(e)9, the report is deemed to be adopted by the House.

### STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL POLICY

**Mr. Khalil Ramal (London–Fanshawe):** I beg leave to present a report from the standing committee on social policy and move its adoption.

**The Clerk-at-the-Table (Mr. Todd Decker):** Your committee begs to report the following bill, as amended:

Bill 78, An Act to amend the Education Act, the Ontario College of Teachers Act, 1996 and certain other statutes relating to education / *Projet de loi 78, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'éducation, la Loi de 1996 sur l'Ordre des enseignantes et des enseignants de l'Ontario et certaines autres lois se rapportant à l'éducation.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Shall the report be received and adopted? Agreed.

The bill is therefore ordered for third reading.

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### HIGHWAY TRAFFIC AMENDMENT ACT (SPEED LIMITERS), 2006

#### LOI DE 2006 MODIFIANT LE CODE DE LA ROUTE (LIMITEURS DE VITESSE)

Ms. Scott moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 115, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act to improve air quality by reducing truck emissions / *Projet*

*de loi 115, Loi modifiant le Code de la route pour améliorer la qualité de l'air en réduisant les émissions de camions.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

The member may wish to make a brief explanation.

**Ms. Laurie Scott (Haliburton–Victoria–Brock):** The bill amends the Highway Traffic Act by requiring a person repairing or maintaining a motor vehicle manufactured after 1995, and having a weight exceeding 11,000 kilograms, to have a speed limiter set at a maximum speed 105 kilometres per hour when the person releases the vehicle to another person.

Also, the driver or person responsible for the operation of such a motor vehicle is required to have the speed limiter set at a maximum speed of 105 kilometres per hour.

It is an offence to contravene those two requirements. A person is deemed to have contravened the requirement for drivers and operators if the driver is convicted of a speeding offence for driving the motor vehicle at a speed greater than 105 kilometres per hour.

1350

### BETTER HEARING AND SPEECH MONTH ACT, 2006

#### LOI DE 2006 SUR LE MOIS DE LA CORRECTION DES TROUBLES DE L'AUDITION ET DU LANGAGE

Mr. Klees moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 116, An Act to proclaim Better Hearing and Speech Month / *Projet de loi 116, Loi proclamant le Mois de la correction des troubles de l'audition et du langage.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

The Member may wish to make a brief explanation.

**Mr. Frank Klees (Oak Ridges):** In presenting this bill for first reading, I want to acknowledge the initiative of the Ontario Association of Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists. I want to welcome to the House today Ms. Beth Anne Kenny, executive director, Mr. Ronnie Grant, audiologist, and Ms. Rhonda Jacobson, the project manager, who are in the west members' gallery today.

I want to acknowledge specifically the advocacy of Ms. Rhonda Jacobson, who spent a great deal of time educating me about this issue and is largely responsible for this bill being before the House today.

The association has been working hard to raise awareness of communication and swallowing disorders that affect approximately one in 10 adults and up to 20% of children. Awareness is crucial to ensure that those afflicted with these disorders get the treatment they need. Early detection and treatment are vital for improving the quality of life for persons who suffer from these disorders and for allowing those persons to survive.

It is imperative, therefore, that we increase public awareness of hearing and speech disorders by proclaiming the month of May in each year as Better Hearing and Speech Month. By passing this bill, the members of this Legislature will be making a significant contribution to increasing that awareness.

#### VISITORS

**Mr. Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina):** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I would just like to acknowledge the parents of Gemma, one of the pages, and they are Jane French, who is one of the founding members of Doors Open Toronto, happening May 27 and 28, and Andrew Johnson, the father, who is a fellow Harbordite.

**Mr. John Yakabuski (Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke):** Also on a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I would like to recognize the tremendous work of my page from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke's Palmer Rapids Public School, Morgan Brodofske, and how proud everyone is of the job she has done in the Legislature.

I would also like to recognize John and Helen Leeftang, the parents of page Elliott from North Elmsley Public School in Lanark, who have joined us in the members' east gallery today.

**Mr. Khalil Ramal (London-Fanshawe):** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I want the House to join me in welcoming my staff from the community office in London, Steve Roloson, who is here with us today to listen to the debate between both sides.

#### STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

##### AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

**Hon. Joseph Cordiano (Minister of Economic Development and Trade):** Before I begin, I should point out to the member for Trinity-Spadina that my wife is a fellow Harbordite, to put in a plug for her too.

It's a pleasure to have this opportunity to inform this House and the people of this great province of another important success story that will create more jobs, more prosperity and more opportunities for Ontario workers and their families. Yesterday, Honda Canada announced that it is set to expand its presence here by building a new, fully integrated powertrain facility in Alliston, adjacent to the company's two successful Ontario auto assembly facilities. The project represents Honda's first foray into powertrain production in Canada. It's the most recent major win for our province in an unprecedented line of automotive wins. Honda will create 340 new, high-value jobs, jobs that the people of Ontario can rely on to build a prosperous life for themselves and for their families. It is another strong show of confidence in Ontario's vibrant and innovative auto sector, and it's another strong show of confidence in Ontario's skilled and talented workforce. It reinforces the fact that we are now the key automotive manufacturing centre in North America.

Honda's announcement follows our announcement last week with Linamar Corp. Linamar, a global auto parts supplier, is creating 3,000 new jobs in the Guelph area as the company implements its economic growth strategy. Just a few weeks earlier, we joined Toyotetsu, a major parts supplier to Toyota, to announce the company's decision to bring its first Canadian operation to Ontario. Toyotetsu will invest \$50 million for a new components plant in the town of Simcoe, creating 250 jobs at start-up.

These vital job-creating investments have occurred in the past weeks. In these past two years, we've attracted over \$7 billion in new automotive investments. Specifically, Ontario's \$500-million automotive investment strategy has leveraged more than \$5.4 billion in new investments at Ford, General Motors, DaimlerChrysler and parts makers Nemak and Linamar, and the list goes on. We've attracted close to an additional \$1.4 billion from the new Toyota plant in Woodstock and through the Navistar investments in Chatham and Windsor.

What this all means is that clearly there's a great deal of confidence out there in Ontario's auto sector. Our manufacturers are weathering the storm of a high dollar and a highly competitive global marketplace. As Dennis DesRosier, a leading automotive industry analyst, said this week, Ontario's automotive investments are well spent. It's not just the big assembly plants that are creating the most jobs. DesRosier writes that there will be many more parts jobs—three to one, in fact—than assembly jobs, and that Ontario will get our fair share.

Our government is committed to making sure our people get the best opportunities out there, and that's why we're proud to work in partnership with Honda. Ontario's investments will help the company bring this highly efficient and innovative facility to life by investing in public infrastructure. We know very well that manufacturers in Ontario are facing some very real, very tough challenges, but our automotive investment plans are clearly working. We're attracting huge new investments, and we're creating thousands of high-value jobs across this anchor industry, and we're doing much more to attract and keep investment here in the province. We're modernizing our roads, bridges, highways, tunnels and public transit. We're building a knowledge-driven workforce by making strategic investments in post-secondary education and research and development. We've introduced a jobs and skills renewal strategy and invested in training and apprenticeship tax credits. The capital tax will be eliminated, if we're on target, by 2010. Finally, we're re-establishing Ontario's presence on the international stage and working hard to promote Ontario exporters and expand their opportunities in new markets around the globe.

We're helping Ontario companies meet today's challenges so that businesses can continue creating prosperity and spreading wealth to workers, families and communities right across our great province. We're doing this for families who rely on a strong auto industry for jobs and opportunities.



1400

## ANTI-SMOKING LEGISLATION

## LOI CONTRE LE TABAGISME

**Hon. Jim Watson (Minister of Health Promotion):**

In 14 days, the Smoke-Free Ontario Act comes into force. It will ban smoking in all enclosed workplaces and enclosed public places throughout Ontario.

The Smoke-Free Ontario Act will further protect youth in our province by strengthening laws on tobacco sales to minors and by restricting the enticing promotional displays erected by tobacco companies to lure a new generation of addicts.

I want to take a moment to congratulate the over 800 high school students I was with yesterday in Ottawa, with my colleague from Ottawa-Orléans, for the Exposé awards for anti-tobacco initiatives and, in particular, a constituent of mine. A grade 12 student at Merivale High School, Stephen Bickram, was one of the award winners for his poster design.

Un récent sondage indique que 90 % des Ontariens préfèrent un environnement sans fumée. Dans ce contexte, je crois que les mesures de protection de la santé que nous avons enchâssées dans cette nouvelle loi vont obtenir l'appui massif de la population.

At the same time, our government recognizes that in order to ensure the safety of Ontario families, we need to be firm in the enforcement of the legislation. That's why I'm pleased to announce that our government is investing an additional \$5.5 million this year in enforcing the Smoke-Free Ontario Act.

I'm proud to note that this investment means the government is now funding 100% of the cost of tobacco control inspection and enforcement by each of the province's 36 public health units. This is yet another example of the McGuinty government uploading costs from the municipality, as opposed to the previous government, which had a track record of downloading costs to municipalities. It also covers the cost for enforcement training and the development of a new electronic tobacco inspection system aimed at creating province-wide standards.

Across the province, communities have different enforcement needs, depending on local factors such as existing municipal bylaws, economic drivers, demographics and compliance history. To help the public health units meet the challenge of ensuring compliance in the regions, our government has allotted enforcement funding with built-in flexibility so that regions can maximize their enforcement efforts.

We're also providing very helpful information on our website and in person, through the public health units. Plain-language fact sheets on all aspects of the smoke-free Ontario law are available on our website and can be downloaded at [www.mhp.gov.on.ca](http://www.mhp.gov.on.ca). The ministry staff have also travelled to various regions of the province offering seminars and helpful bilateral meetings with all 36 public health units.

I'm proud to say, on behalf of families in Windsor and Essex, we're providing \$350,000, for instance, in enforcement funding to the Windsor-Essex County Health Unit.

Grâce à ce financement, tous les résidents de Windsor-Essex pourront bientôt mieux respirer et profiter des mesures de protection de la santé auxquelles ils ont droit.

Cet investissement aidera l'Ontario à réduire la consommation de tabac de 20 % dans la province par rapport au niveau enregistré en 2003. Cela représente 3,2 milliards de cigarettes qui ne seront pas fumées en 2007, ainsi que la prévention de milliers de décès évitables.

The Toronto Public Health unit, where I was today, has the challenge of ensuring compliance in Ontario's most populous and diverse centre. The \$1.3 million we're investing in a smoke-free Toronto will safeguard the health of families and help bring consistency and more worker protection to Toronto's thriving hospitality industry.

I'm confident that Toronto's restaurant and bar owners will continue to flourish under the new legislation, and I have been encouraged by the level of dialogue between my ministry and the Ontario Restaurant Hotel and Motel Association.

As a former mayor of Ottawa, I can tell you that the no-smoking bylaw in that city had no negative long-term impact on licensed restaurants and bar sales nor on unlicensed restaurant sales. When municipalities such as Ottawa and New York City have gone smoke-free, non-smokers dine out more frequently and there is no net loss to the industry. In fact, in a study one year after the New York example, bar receipts increased by approximately 8.7%.

Notre stratégie anti-tabac de l'Ontario est l'une des stratégies de lutte au tabagisme les plus complètes en Amérique du Nord.

This has happened all over the province. My colleague from Thornhill, Mario Racco, was one of the first city councillors, for instance, to introduce a bylaw in Vaughan. That was the kind of leadership back several years ago that we are hoping to emulate with the Smoke-Free Ontario Act.

The McGuinty government is proud to be on the side of Ontarians who care about their health and support decisive action against the leading cause of death and disease in our province. Smoking, sadly, in this province will kill 16,000 people prematurely. The investment we're making in compliance will ensure futures for our youth, their families, our communities and our province. Merci beaucoup.

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Statements by the ministry? Responses?

**Ms. Laurie Scott (Haliburton-Victoria-Brock):** In response to the Minister of Health Promotion, we certainly appreciate the efforts to decrease smoking and limit exposure to second-hand smoke. I agree with things that will encourage young people not to smoke, and I'm glad to see that you're helping municipalities with the cost of enforcing your rule. But I have some concerns



with the legislation that will impact businesses, such as those that have invested millions in designated ventilated smoking rooms, to comply with the municipal legislation. These business people have acted in good faith. They complied with the bylaws put in place by the democratically elected local governments. Will you help them pay off the cost of their smoking rooms?

I'm also concerned about work for residents in long-term care centres. In the legislation, you say that a ventilated smoking room can be made available for residents of long-term care, but that they must be able to get themselves in and out of the room without assistance, and staff must not be required to enter the room. What if someone can't get themselves in and out of the room without assistance, and what if they need medical help in the room?

So we support the efforts to decrease smoking and decrease exposure to second-hand smoke, but at the same time we believe that we should be helping those business people whose livelihoods will be negatively impacted. This includes tobacco farmers and convenience store owners. These people's businesses rely on a legal product. We know that tobacco is dangerous, but it is a legal product. We all know that you have not produced a plan to help the Ontario business people make this transition to producing or selling other products. So I ask you, where's your plan to help tobacco farmers and convenience store owners? Your goal is good, but you have to have a plan to achieve this.

#### AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

**Mr. John O'Toole (Durham):** Certainly it is a good-news announcement today for the auto sector. I'd like to pay tribute to the hard-working members of the auto sector in Ontario, and indeed in Allison specifically. It's a success for Ontario and has been for many years. I would say, to use a popular expression today, we are on the side of all employees in Ontario. You may recall that expression you've been popularizing.

Let's look at the history. Let's not pat ourselves on the back too quickly, Minister. What you should recall is that the work that was done by the previous Conservative government in their announcement in the automotive action plan—some of your members don't recall because they don't understand—\$625 million. The minister would like to take full credit for it. It takes time for these investments to be realized in the marketplace—a good understanding of the sector done by Jim Flaherty as the Minister of Innovation as well.

But let's look at what the policy really is. We consented that nobody in Ontario should be left behind in the economy of Ontario. That's our policy. One sector by one sector is not specifically the right kind of policy. Look at their policies on gridlock. Look at their policies on energy prices. The border issues at Windsor are going to slow down this sector, there's work to be done there, but to be competitive in the tax structure is something where the McGuinty government takes first prize. They are the least competitive sector. If you look not just at the

health tax but at the headlines yesterday in the Toronto Star: "Auto Industry Faces Rocky Road, Report Says"; this is the Conference Board of Canada report. Here's another one: "Cost Cuts in Business in Trouble in Ontario." This is by the CD Howe and the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters. They say you're simply not tax-competitive.

If you don't listen to the industry experts, Minister, you're doomed to fail, and that's exactly what you've done to many people of Ontario. How about the 65,000 people in other parts of Ontario, in other sectors of Ontario? Those families have no paycheque. Minister, your plan is about 25% complete. Think of all the people of Ontario and the dismal job you're doing on almost every front. You should be apologizing here and acknowledging the work that was done to become tax-competitive under the Harris and and Eves government.

I can say to you that 340 jobs in Honda is good news, but it's hardly a first step on a long, rocky road, as testified by the CME, the Conference Board of Canada, as well as Michael Grimaldi, president of General Motors. Read his Canadian auto parts speech on September 11.

You've got a long way to go, Minister. Don't break your arm patting yourself on the back.

1410

**Mr. Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay):** Thank God for Honda for the people of Alliston, because if it was up to the McGuinty government, they might suffer the fate of other communities across Ontario, which have seen thousands of job losses in the automotive sector.

We know, for example, that while Alliston is going to be getting a new automotive assembly plant for engines, which is good news for that community, other communities across this province have lost engine plants in the Ford and GM chains, and the loss of jobs offset by the creation of these new ones is not going to do anything to mitigate the job losses we've had up to now. Also, this is not to talk about the losses we've had in the auto parts manufacturing sector, which are frankly quite alarming at the rate we are losing them.

I just say to the minister that there is a big part of this province that was forgotten in all this. If you take a look at the job losses across northern Ontario with regard to forestry, thousands of jobs have been lost and communities have lost their entire employer. For example, Smooth Rock Falls, Opatika, Kenora and others have been devastated by the McGuinty government's attempt to do nothing when it comes to assisting those communities.

I say that this is nothing more than Dalton McGuinty getting ready for the next election and looking for some good news.

#### ANTI-SMOKING LEGISLATION

**Ms. Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt):** In response to the statement made by the Minister of Health Promotion, I want to start where he ends, which is the last paragraph



of his statement. It says, "Smoking still causes 16,000 deaths each year in Ontario. The investment we are making in compliance will ensure brighter futures for our youth...."

The best thing the Liberal government could have done to ensure a brighter future for youth would have been to keep the Liberal election promise, which was to ban countertop and behind-the-counter retail displays of tobacco products, not in 2008, which is what Bill 164 says now, but by May 31, 2006, when the rest of Ontario will go smoke-free.

The committee that dealt with Bill 164 heard repeatedly from health care providers, from health care agencies, from public health units and, most importantly, from youth themselves who urged the government to ban countertop and behind-the-counter retail displays of tobacco products. Here's what some of the youth had to say.

This is Tanya Wagner, who represented the Whitby Youth Council:

"Tobacco advertising and promotion increase smoking and the number of youth who start smoking. A ban on such advertising and promotion would decrease smoking among adults and youth. That would be a ... good thing...."

"But recently I was thinking about why I smoked in the first place.... I smoked du Maurier and sometimes Players. And I noticed the other day that those two brands were the most noticeable behind the counter of my local store. I think that I am living proof that tobacco advertising affects teens. This is why I wanted to talk to you about it today, and ask that you ban retail displays of cigarettes, including power walls."

This is what Olivia Puckrin and Caylie Gilmore, students from Port Perry, had to say:

"You probably know that tobacco companies aren't allowed to advertise their products. But, still ... every kid I know can name about five different brands of cigarettes. How is that?"

"Well, it is no mystery. Every time we go into a store, cigarettes are there. Cigarettes are displayed on the counter, behind the counter and even in the counter. We recently learned that the tobacco industry pays stores \$88 million a year to do it. This advertising not only tempts adults,... but it makes cigarettes look like a normal product. But no other product will kill you if you use it as the manufacturer intends. So how can this be normal?"

Finally, a presentation by Brian Dallaway of Wide Awake: Generation Against Tobacco:

"While we applaud the proposed legislation for reducing advertising in retail stores, the language of the act does not prohibit power walls. We would like to see the province capitalize on this opportunity to eliminate this form of advertising which is targeted at children and youth."

The fact of the matter is that the amendments that were made to Bill 164 continue to allow retail stores to display individual cigarette packages behind the counter, on the counter and in the counter: 100, 200, 250 packages of cigarettes. There is no limit on where and how many

individual cigarette packages can still be on display for young people. So this form of advertising is going to continue to tempt young people to start smoking, and we know that 60% of tobacco purchases are impulse purchases, so that gives us all an idea of the magnitude of the problem that continues. That's why, on behalf of New Democrats, I moved an amendment to ban countertop-and-behind retail displays of tobacco products by May 31, 2006, and the Liberal members on the committee voted that down.

Now we know that thousands and thousands and thousands of young people between 2006 and 2008 will continue to be influenced, will continue to start to smoke and will continue to be the cancer statistics 20 years from now.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### ONTARIO DRUG BENEFIT PROGRAM

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer (Kitchener-Waterloo):** My question is for the Premier. Yesterday, the Coalition of Ontario Pharmacy, a grassroots organization which represents about 80%, a huge majority, of Ontario's pharmacies, held a press conference here at Queen's Park. They are very concerned about Bill 102. They are concerned that as a result of this legislation, pharmacies can lose about \$150,000 per store in revenues. That's a lot of money for these small businesses. They also say that as a result of your bill, as many as 300 pharmacies, primarily in rural and northern Ontario, could close. I ask you: Is it your plan to close 10% of Ontario's pharmacies?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Research and Innovation):** To the Minister of Health.

**Hon. George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** No, to the extraordinary contrary. In the United States, the purpose or role of pharmacy has been really just to commoditize the role. They've become pill shovellers. What we have worked towards, after a request that's been on the books for 17 years from the Ontario Pharmacists' Association, is to acknowledge all of the capacity of pharmacists for the role that they can play as front-line health care providers. That's why an essential and important element of our legislation, if supported by the House, would see us be able to move forward and begin to reward those pharmacists for the work they do as front-line health care providers, and that's through \$50 million of cognitive services fees.

This speaks to our understanding and vision, aligned with the Ontario Pharmacists' Association of pharmacists who are engaged on the front line and assisting patients. We believe pharmacists have that role to play, and accordingly, that's what our proposals are about.

**Mrs. Witmer:** To the Premier again: I would indicate to you that a letter was sent to you this morning from Allan Rajesky, a pharmacist representing the coalition. I want to quote from the letter:



"We are concerned by your government's position on community pharmacy as it was explained to me and several of my colleagues by the director of your government's Drug System Secretariat.

"During the meeting, your director admitted that the government expects some pharmacies to close as a consequence of Bill 102. He said that there are currently too many pharmacies in the province."

Premier, how many community pharmacies does your government expect to close as a result of the funding cuts that are being proposed in this bill?

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** None. The question that was asked—and anyone would have answered it the same way—is that government can offer no guarantee that every independent business operation that's out there shall remain into the future.

I had my opportunity on Saturday night at the Ontario Pharmacists' Association convention—this is, of course, the organization that's primarily the voice for pharmacists in the province of Ontario—to make mention of the fact that as a film processor, as someone who was involved in the business of film processing, I lost considerable market share to pharmacies themselves who ventured into that line of work.

So Mr. Fraser was merely speaking to the point that government cannot, of course, guarantee the operation of any pharmacy. However, in my speech, I worked very, very clearly to indicate all of those areas where increased revenue flows to pharmacists, in addition to the cognitive fee, a 7% increase—

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Thank you. Final supplementary.

1420

**Mrs. Witmer:** To the Premier again: It's obvious that the pharmacists, the 80% who have joined the coalition, the voice of pharmacy in this province, didn't believe your minister on the weekend and obviously are concerned about the rapid progression of this bill through the Legislature. We are hearing that not only are we going to see a loss of 300 pharmacies, but the ones that are going to be staying open are also going to have to, as a result of an economic study that they've done, reduce hours of operation, lay off staff and increase wait times for the filling of prescriptions. Again, Ontarians in your Ontario are going to be paying more for health and getting less.

I ask you, Premier: How many pharmacies does your government believe it's necessary to cut at this time?

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** I already answered the question to the honourable member, but her credibility on subjects like this is of course limited by the fact that she was part of a political party that promised to the people of Ontario that no hospital would be closed and then they closed 28 of them. So we have to take with a grain of salt the nature of those questions coming from the honourable member opposite.

Fundamentally, we believe that we have the capacity in the province of Ontario to get better value for the dollars that we're spending so that we can enhance access for Ontarians to more innovative drug products. We sent

a clear demonstration through our proposals of our capacity to create much more timely mechanisms. Fundamental to our initiative is the belief that the government of Ontario's investment in pharmaceutical product can result in the patients of Ontario receiving greater access to drugs. This is a fundamental improvement in terms of health care benefits to the people of Ontario.

**The Speaker:** New question.

**Mrs. Witmer:** My question again is to the Premier. I'm sorry that the Premier doesn't see this as an issue of great importance to all residents. I'm sorry, this legislation has totally failed to take into account the impact that it's going to have on Ontario's families. This is proof that you are not on the side of Ontarians or pharmacists in the province of Ontario. Your reforms, such as the reduction in the markup and the dollar cap on markups, mean that pharmacists are actually going to lose money if they stock and dispense expensive drugs used to treat diseases like cancer, HIV/AIDS and MS. This is going to hit people in rural and northern Ontario particularly hard. The coalition warns us that there simply will not be enough drugs for all Ontarians.

I ask you, Premier, what contingency plans does your government have to make sure that families in this province have access to pharmacists?

**Hon. Mr. McGuinty:** To the Minister of Health.

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** Here's some of what patient groups had to say about our proposed legislation:

"The drug system changes will greatly benefit patients in the province. Patients, particularly those living with a chronic disease like diabetes, will have better access to the drugs they need and they will now have a say in the decisions being made on drug funding." Karen Philp, national director, Canadian Diabetes Association.

The Cancer Advocacy Coalition of Canada: "Ontario appears to have set a new standard for access to drugs, one that other provinces can emulate. Today, cancer patients have renewed confidence that they have been heard and their needs will be addressed."

I have more, but those quotes underscore our fundamental belief that here in the province of Ontario, the second-highest per capita funder of a public drug system, and yet results that many patients find inadequate to their needs—we believe we can do a better job for them. That's why they are standing in support of this initiative. And of course, with respect to the concerns raised by pharmacists, we take them seriously, and that's why we are so engaged—

**The Speaker:** Thank you.

**Mrs. Witmer:** Despite the rhetoric from the minister, I would remind him that although he lined up lots of people to speak in favour of the bill, they have now had an opportunity to analyze, and I'll tell you, they are meeting with me today, tomorrow and the next day because they are concerned.

You are trying to push this bill through the Legislature. You introduced a very draconian allocation motion. You don't want anybody to know what's really in the bill. You talk about cognitive fees and everything



else. What does that mean to a pharmacist who doesn't have a job? Furthermore, this bill doesn't give money to pharmacists. That's all something that you promised, and we know what this government does with promises. They break them, each and every time.

I would say to you, you are not on the side of people in the province of Ontario. I want to ask you again, how many pharmacies are going to close in this province and how many people are going to be hurt by your reforms?

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** Before the honourable member stands in her place and proposes to take on the voice of patients in Ontario, maybe she should stand and fess up to the reality, which is that the patients of Ontario received no greater degree of misinformation than from that party when they were in office. The commitment to keep hospitals open when they closed 28 is remembered well in community after community across Ontario.

Here is what Dennis Morris of the Best Medicines Coalition said: "Overall what is happening is really good news from a patient perspective. It's absolutely terrific in terms of patient involvement. Finally we'll be putting patients back in the public policy."

I suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, that the patients rather than the stakeholders are what's got them all upset, because they can't stand to see the patients satisfied.

**Mrs. Witmer:** Those are old quotes. I would suggest to the minister right now that we are starting to hear from patient groups and we are certainly hearing from pharmacists. In fact, there are very few people in this province who are happy with Bill 102 since they've had a chance to analyze what is actually in the bill.

I would say to you, what is going to happen to people in underserved communities if these pharmacies close, as they are projected to do? In fact, I would like to remind you that under your watch, the number of underserved communities has increased from 126 to 135. That's what is on your website today. There are 900 pharmacies and 1,800 pharmacists in those underserved communities. They are crucial to patients in those areas. What are you going to do for people in those communities that are underserved, like Uxbridge, Harrow, Goderich, Forest, Grimsby etc?

**The Speaker:** The question has been asked.

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** The first thing that I'm going to do, that our government is going to do, in response to the needs of people in underserved communities is not do what you did, which is that for the first four years that you had the privilege of being the government of Ontario, you turned your back on the recognition that that party, while in government, shrank the size of our medical schools. The first thing we are doing is enhancing our medical schools to the tune of 23%. We have worked vigorously on this initiative with a view towards small rural communities. In fact, inside government we used the Tweed standard. We said, "How will this play out with respect to Tweed?"

The honourable member doesn't get one point. She doesn't understand fundamentally the opportunity that is

presented for pharmacists in Ontario, that they will lead the land and they will lead North America in the financial recognition of the brainpower they have and the capacity they have to influence the patients of Ontario. They can't stand the good news for patients, Mr. Speaker.

## ELECTRICITY SUPPLY

**Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** My question is for the Premier. After last summer's widespread electricity shortage warnings, voltage reductions and electricity brownouts, working families are concerned and want to know, will our hospitals and nursing homes be able to respond to electricity brownouts or blackouts without patient health being put at risk? They want to know what plans are in place to deal with electricity brownout or blackout.

New Democrats asked your government for these plans some time ago. You refused to make them public. When Environment Canada is warning that this will be a hot summer where electricity brownout and blackout can happen, what is your justification for your information blackout?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Research and Innovation):** To the Minister of Energy.

**Hon. Donna H. Cansfield (Minister of Energy):** I thank the member for the question. The Independent Electricity System Operator has indicated that for this coming year we have sufficient supply onside. In fact, we have added significantly, 700 megawatts of new supply, in addition to upgrading our transmission and our transmission stations. They have indicated that we are in good shape.

In the event that something unforeseen should occur, the Independent Electricity System Operator has an emergency plan they put in place. They work with the businesses, they work with the industry, and they actually reduce the peak load in that industry's electricity demand. That system is in place on an emergency basis and on a contract basis, and they have in place a forward market that they are working for this summer to deal with imports from the United States. The system is well in hand with the Independent Electricity System Operator, and they have indicated, as I said, that for this summer the plans are well in place.

1430

**Mr. Hampton:** Premier, last summer you told folks that plans were well in place, yet brownouts and blackouts happened. In fact, rolling brownouts were fairly frequent. People are seeking basic information: Will hospitals be informed of voltage reductions? Will hospitals have time to respond such that patient health won't be at risk?

We asked for the plans. You refused to make them public. So we filed a freedom of information request, asking for the plans, and your response was that only cabinet ministers are allowed to see the plans.

Premier, my question is this: Why is it that Dalton McGuinty and his cabinet are allowed to see Ontario's



brownout or blackout response plans but hospitals, nursing homes and just concerned Ontarians aren't allowed to know what those plans are and whether or not they're adequate?

**Hon. Mrs. Cansfield:** I guess the member had forgotten he asked this question some time ago, so I'll repeat that the Independent Electricity System Operator actually contacts the hospitals when they're doing their voltage requirements. All hospitals have standby generation; it's diesel. As a matter of fact, I stood in this House just a few days ago and indicated that Toronto Hydro has been working with a number of these organizations, some of which are hospitals, to deal with peak voltage demand reduction by putting on their standby generators. So there are plans in place, both with Toronto Hydro and with the Independent Electricity System Operator on an emergency basis and on a going-forward basis to deal with peak reduction, if required. I reiterate, the Independent Electricity System Operator has indicated that for the coming year we have put sufficient transmission and supply generation in place to deal with any potential outages.

**Mr. Hampton:** That was exactly the same answer you gave people last year. But what happened last summer? Well, at Kingston General Hospital a brownout happened, in the Kingston area. It put patients at risk. It knocked out cancer radiation machines, it knocked out X-ray machines and it sent temperatures in the operating room up to 38 degrees Celsius. So your plan didn't work very well last year.

Premier, you've made a lot of noise about making our hydroelectricity system more open and transparent, making it open to freedom of information, but now who's blocking the information? The McGuinty government. It's the McGuinty government that doesn't want hospitals, nursing homes and the general public to know what the plan is and whether or not the plan is adequate. Premier, ordinary people across Ontario want to know that patients in hospitals and nursing homes will not be put at risk if there's an electricity brownout or blackout—

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** The question has been asked. Minister.

**Hon. Mrs. Cansfield:** I will reiterate: We do have a plan. We're planning to keep the lights on. Those lights will stay on, because we do have an emergency response in place.

Let me tell you what we've done. There's 500 megawatts of demand response—demand management programs—right across this province: up to 100 megawatts of conservation for low-income and social housing; 100 megawatts for appliance reduction; 150 megawatts in the residential sector; and an additional 150 megawatts in the commercial building sector.

We are working with BOMA, the association of business and management operators for large businesses. We are working with hospitals in the MUSH sector, called greening the hospitals. We are working with Toronto Hydro, an additional 300 megawatts of demand response, in addition to the 250, of which you saw the

potential for 137 that occurred here last week, downtown in Toronto. We have those plans in place. They are there for you to see. They are there for him to participate—

**The Speaker:** Thank you. New question.

## SOFTWOOD LUMBER

**Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** To the Premier: I guess the gist of the story is that the McGuinty government that was going to make our electricity system transparent now wants to hide the details from the people of Ontario.

Premier, working families in Ontario's forest sector communities are very concerned about the softwood lumber sellout that you say is such a good deal. Working families in those communities realize that allowing the United States to keep a billion dollars of Canadian softwood lumber duties is a sellout, that allowing new export charges is a sellout, that allowing new quotas is a sellout that's going to shut mills and kill jobs.

Today, the Ontario Forest Industry Association and the Ontario lumber manufacturers' trade group, representing 98% of softwood lumber producers in the province, are going to court to challenge this deal that you say is so good. My question is, will the McGuinty government intervene on the side of those workers and those mills to get a better deal?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Research and Innovation):** The Minister of Natural Resources.

**Hon. David Ramsay (Minister of Natural Resources, minister responsible for aboriginal affairs):** I'd like to inform the member that, as he knows, what was agreed upon by the two countries—the United States and Canada—about three weeks ago now, was a framework agreement.

Since then the two countries, with input from the provinces—our team has been in Ottawa all this time working with our federal negotiators to finalize the agreement with the United States. In that, we continue to fight for Ontario industry to make sure the agreement will serve the Ontario industry well, and that we have a sustainable forest industry in northern Ontario.

**Mr. Hampton:** Here's the reality: The deal that the McGuinty government said just a few weeks ago was such a good deal is now the very deal that softwood lumber producers in Ontario are going to court in Canada and the United States to oppose, because they see it as a raw deal and they know they deserve better.

You've been all across the north telling people this is a wonderful deal. My question to the Premier is, will the McGuinty government go to court and intervene with these Ontario softwood lumber producers? Are you on their side, or are you on the side of a softwood lumber deal that is a sellout for Ontario workers?

**Hon. Mr. Ramsay:** Mr. Speaker, we are not going to court. We are not going to intervene in this. If the member had paid attention on the day the two countries made the announcement, the American industry did file



an extraordinary challenge on that day, not knowing if this deal would be finalized or not. This is a suit in the American courts to counter that. So that is going on, and our industry has a legitimate right to do that. Obviously, it also puts pressure on the negotiating process to make sure that Canada gets the best deal it can.

Our government does stand behind this deal, and I think a lot of the evidence is that we're starting to see our companies in the north wanting to ramp up and making plans to consolidate with other industries so we have sustainable jobs in the north.

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Final supplementary.

**Mr. Hampton:** Minister, I don't call Ontario's softwood lumber companies going to court in the United States and going to court in Canada to overcome, to do away with, your softwood lumber deal, ramping up. If anything, they know that you have sold them out.

These are communities that have already lost thousands of jobs thanks to the McGuinty government. These are communities that see that what you've done is essentially say to the United States, "You can dictate to Ontario, and you can dictate to Ontario's softwood lumber producers."

I simply ask again, is the McGuinty government going to continue to defend this sellout deal that's going to kill thousands more jobs in northern Ontario, or are you going to get on the side of those Ontario communities and those Ontario workers who have already suffered too much, thanks to the McGuinty government?

1440

**Hon. Mr. Ramsay:** Ontario continues to work with the other provinces and the federal government to work out the very best final deal that we can. But we accept and feel that the framework agreement that was reached between the two countries will sustain our industry. In fact, the example we had last week, when Buchanan Forest Products announced their purchase of Neenah Paper in Terrace Bay. The pulp and paper industry there has had a tough time surviving and has been in a strike situation. Ken Buchanan feels that with the money he's going to get returned to him—his money—from the United States, he can now buy that pulp and paper industry and with his vertical integration have a great market for his chips, ramp up jobs in his sawmills and create jobs right across northwestern Ontario.

### ELECTRICITY SUPPLY

**Mr. John Yakabuski (Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke):** My question is for the Minister of Energy. Minister, you said earlier in response to the leader of the third party that you have a plan to keep the lights on in Ontario. Well, there are a lot of people planning to win a lottery, and I'm not betting on either one of them.

The chamber of commerce is very worried about your energy policy and the future of business in this province under your energy policy. The chamber, which represents 57,000 businesses in this province, has been continually

telling you that your plan will not work. They've issued press releases admonishing you to retract your ill-conceived policy to shut down 20% of our generating capacity. Will you do as they say in their latest recommendation and invest in clean coal technology so that in fact the lights will go on, and we will do our environment a favour by stopping the burning of dirty coal in—

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** The question has been asked.

**Hon. Donna H. Cansfield (Minister of Energy):** I thank the member for his question. When he can prove there is clean coal technology, he can walk across this aisle. There is cleaner coal, but there is no such thing as clean coal. Even the Power Workers are now starting to say "cleaner" coal technology.

I was actually with the chamber of commerce and had a conversation with them. One of the things we resolved to do was to work together on behalf of the people and businesses in Ontario to deal with the challenges that face us within the energy sector. We had a resoundingly good, solid meeting together to find resolutions and solutions that meet both our needs.

It was an exciting morning for me to be able to have that interaction with the chamber of commerce. I look forward to that continuing conversation with them as we meet with the Ontario Convenience Stores Association, as we continue to meet with retailers, as we continue to meet with manufacturers, as we continue to meet with residential consumers, as we continue to meet—

**The Speaker:** Thank you.

**Mr. Yakabuski:** I'm not sure if you're defining "clean" or "spotless," but there are no clean cars in this world either. We're not shutting them down.

Minister, you've gone to court to force United States's plants to install cleaner coal technology. I'm wondering when you're going to sue your own plants to install that technology, because if you don't think advantages are there and improvements can be made, then why are you going to court to force others to do exactly that?

You are dirtying our air, but you are absolutely ensuring that if you follow this policy, the lights will go off. We need assurances in this province. Some 57,000 businesses have to know that when your policy is enacted, they'll have power, and under your policy they're assured that they won't, to the point that they're adopting resolutions at their annual meetings to tell you what you can't seem to figure out for yourself, that you are ensuring darkness in this province—

**The Speaker:** Thank you.

**Hon. Mrs. Cansfield:** We are going to keep the lights on for the people of Ontario and we are going to do it by working together with the people of Ontario to make that happen. That really is the difference. We have a plan; they didn't. It's like the other members: They didn't like coal, now they like coal. They didn't like nuclear—well, now they might or they might not. They never liked wind. "Some will die, but what the heck, we'll just continue on anyway."

The fact of the matter is, there is a plan in place. The challenge is, you just don't happen to like it. There are



only four kinds: endopipe, gasification, zero emissions, which doesn't exist, and supercritical or fluidization. You and I both know there is no such thing as clean coal.

### CHILD PROTECTION

**Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** My question is for the Premier. Today, the individuals responsible for the death of the little boy, Jeffrey Baldwin, will be sentenced. Yesterday, I told you of an eight-year-old boy from Durham whose grandparents had to struggle against the children's aid society and the group home where he'd been placed. Every day, we hear from families across Ontario who cannot get independent reviews of children's aid society decisions. Nearly every other province in Canada provides for independent review of children's aid societies, except the McGuinty government in Ontario. We know staff at children's aid societies are overworked and overloaded. Premier, why is the McGuinty government denying children in Ontario and their families an independent review of the activities of children's aid societies?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Research and Innovation):** To the Minister of Children and Youth Services.

**Hon. Mary Anne V. Chambers (Minister of Children and Youth Services):** The leader of the third party asked this question yesterday, and I will repeat my response. Bill 210 was introduced by the McGuinty government to strengthen accountability on the part of children's aid societies and to provide better protection for children in care. In fact, our commitment is that any child in the care of our child well-being and protection system will be better off because we have been involved in their lives. That does not mean that everything is perfect. It means that we are working very hard to ensure that this is indeed the case. Now, through Bill 210, we provided an independent third-party body, with the responsibility for complaints and the Ombudsman has jurisdiction over that body.

**Mr. Hampton:** It's interesting, because your response yesterday brought this letter from Ontario's Ombudsman. This is what he says: "Upon review of Hansard yesterday, I noted reference to my jurisdiction over the Child and Family Services Review Board, under Bill 210." He then goes on to say, "An Ombudsman investigation is not an appeal of the board's decision, and would not involve an investigation of the underlying complaints about children's aid societies. These would continue to remain immune from independent investigative oversight."

It seems that the Ombudsman says that the McGuinty government has it wrong, that you are not providing for independent oversight, and that, in fact, you have stacked the cards against parents and against kids who simply want to ensure that children's aid societies are not a power unto themselves.

I ask the Premier again: Why do you continue with this charade? Why do you continue to oppose independent oversight by the Ombudsman into children's aid society decisions?

**Hon. Mrs. Chambers:** The Ombudsman has independent oversight jurisdiction over the Child and Family Services Review Board, and I am sure that the Ombudsman of this province—and I know of his commitment, which we share, to kids—I know that the Ombudsman would not be writing to the leader of the third party if he is in fact trying to impact policy-making by this government. I have a very constructive, very positive working relationship with the Ombudsman. I am sure that if the Ombudsman has had any difficulty with what I am doing, I will hear from him directly.

### CHILDREN'S TREATMENT CENTRES

**Mr. John Milloy (Kitchener Centre):** My question is also for the Minister of Children and Youth Services. As the minister knows from representations made by all MPPs from my area, KidsAbility, the children's treatment centre in Waterloo-Wellington, serves children and youth with special needs, including children with physical, intellectual and developmental disabilities. They provide physiotherapy, occupational therapy and speech-language therapy as core services.

Despite the miracles that are performed every day at KidsAbility, like many other children's treatment centres across Ontario, its services have been hampered by long waiting lists for its services.

1450

The minister made a significant announcement last week with respect to Ontario's children's treatment centres. I want to ask the minister, what will this announcement mean for children and families seeking services through a CTC in general, and KidsAbility specifically?

**Hon. Mary Anne V. Chambers (Minister of Children and Youth Services):** I want to thank the member, my colleague from Kitchener Centre, for his tenacious, relentless, committed advocacy on behalf of children and youth.

**Interjection:** He's a new father.

**Hon. Mrs. Chambers:** Yes, and he is a new father; I know that. But even before that, he has been on my case, as they say. Thank you.

**Interjection:** In a good way.

**Hon. Mrs. Chambers:** In a very positive way.

I'm really pleased that KidsAbility is one of 19 children's treatment centres that will be benefiting from our government's \$10-million commitment to improved services to kids with special needs. Across the children's treatment centres, this represents a 17% increase in funding, and for KidsAbility, it's a 21% increase. It will allow KidsAbility to serve 475 additional kids this year, with an increase in budget of \$946,000 starting this year.

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Supplementary, the member for Guelph-Wellington.

**Mrs. Liz Sandals (Guelph-Wellington):** This is wonderful news for my community, which is also served by KidsAbility. But we all know that more money isn't the only answer. There need to be measures in place—



*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. I'm having difficulty hearing the member from Guelph-Wellington.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker:** The Minister of Municipal Affairs.

The member for Guelph-Wellington.

**Mrs. Sandals:** Thank you.

We all know that more money isn't the only answer. There need to be measures in place to ensure this investment produces results for the children and families who need support.

Minister, in order for this investment to provide the greatest results province-wide, we also want to ensure that this funding is distributed in a fair manner. Could you please share how the allocation level for each children's treatment centre was determined, and how we are working with the CTCs to ensure this additional investment does the most it can to help children and families with special needs?

**Hon. Mrs. Chambers:** I thank my colleague from Guelph-Wellington, another very strong advocate for kids. There are other members of this Legislature who have supported the children's treatment centres, even though not all of them voted for this budget. I'm not really sure what to make of that confusion.

We have been working really closely with the Ontario Association of Children's Rehabilitation Services. I want to express my appreciation to them for helping us to determine how best to allocate those dollars to ensure maximum service, maximum impact for children, across this province. We will continue to work with them to ensure that they have the human resource planning capacity and that the standards for the variety of services they provide are in fact exactly what our kids need.

## DRINKING AND DRIVING

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North):** My question today is for the Minister of Transportation. At a press conference in the media studio here at Queen's Park this morning, Mothers Against Drunk Driving Canada released their Opportunities for Progress report. The report indicates there is much more that we as legislators can do to protect our citizens from impaired drivers. For example, yesterday the government of Manitoba began the process of saving more lives. Manitoba will increase the zero blood alcohol limit for novice drivers under the graduated driver licensing program from three years to five years, along with several other recommendations that are included in the report.

Minister, could you please tell the House what you have done since coming to power in 2003 to reduce the number of impaired drivers on our roads and to protect the citizens of Ontario?

**Hon. Harinder S. Takhar (Minister of Transportation):** We welcome the report from MADD Canada. They have shown real leadership in this field for many years. It is clear that drinking and driving is unacceptable, that drinking and driving don't mix. That's why we

have the toughest measures for drinking and driving, not only in Canada but in North America. That includes an immediate 90-day driver's licence suspension, a mandatory back-on-track program, a vehicle impoundment program and ignition interlock. We not only have the toughest measures but we enforce them regularly as well. As a result of that, we are the safest region in terms of safety not only in Canada but in North America. I can go even further. Based on fatalities, we have the safest record compared to other regions.

I am looking forward to giving you more information in the supplementary question on how our record compares to the other regions.

**Mr. Dunlop:** Under the Mike Harris government, Ontario ranked—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Stop the clock. Order. The Minister of Health, order.

The member for Simcoe North.

**Mr. Dunlop:** Under the Mike Harris government, Ontario ranked number one in Canada in the fight against impaired driving. For example, Premier Harris and Ministers Klees and Sterling strongly supported my private member's bill on the mandatory ignition interlock, the first legislation of its kind in Canada. Since McGuinty has come to power, MADD Canada indicates that Ontario is slipping badly. We now are far behind Manitoba. In MADD Canada's report card, to be released this fall, they expect that we will slip further down the scale as other provinces continue to make improvements.

Impaired driving fatalities in Ontario are increasing. There is no better example than the death of a young police officer last weekend. The McGuinty government is great at banning pit bulls and you love to regulate the sale of homemade pies at farmers' markets and fall fairs. Why are you not on the side of young drivers and why are you not on the side of MADD Canada? Minister, will you stand in this House today and confirm that you will implement the recommendations of MADD Canada's Opportunities for Progress report and return Ontario to be Canada's leader in the fight against drinking and driving?

**Hon. Mr. Takhar:** I am very pleased to answer the question. Let me say that results speak louder than words: (1) We have the safest roads in North America; (2) if we look at the accidents happening because of alcohol, we have the lowest in North America; (3) in fatalities happening because of alcohol-related incidents, we've got the lowest in North America.

We've got a very, very good record, but that doesn't mean we won't do more. What we have done is this, talking about young people: We have restricted the number of passengers that novice drivers can carry between 12 midnight and 5 a.m. in the morning. We have embarked on a very aggressive education and enforcement program. I can give you the numbers. There have been 5,800 lifetime suspensions; 176,000 almost lost their driving privileges—

**The Speaker:** Thank you. New question.



## LONG-TERM CARE

**Ms. Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt):** I have a question for the Minister of Health. In the last election, your party promised to provide an additional \$6,000 in care for every resident in long-term-care homes. This is a copy of a Liberal campaign brochure, which reads, "Why Seniors Can't Trust the Harris-Eves Government: The Ontario Liberal Plan for Change." It says, "Dalton McGuinty and the Ontario Liberals have a plan to deliver positive change for seniors." Point number 5 says specifically, "Invest in better nursing home care, providing an additional \$6,000 in care for every resident."

Minister, at a time when you had a \$3-billion windfall in the last budget, why haven't you delivered on this promise to residents in long-term-care homes?

1500

**Hon. George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** Substantially, we have. The reality is, for residents in long-term-care homes in the province of Ontario in the days since our government has come to office, not only have they seen the benefits of a \$740-million investment, but they've seen 2,334 additional people working on the front lines of health care and delivering the care to them.

In addition to that, we've increased the comfort allowance—something that hadn't happened in a couple of decades. We froze the co-pay, completing a commitment that we made to roll back the increases that the previous government had brought forward. We brought forward new capacity through our 1-800 info line to be able to ensure that any concerns that are raised in a long-term-care home are appropriately and very promptly responded to.

We have more work to do on this file, and I'm pleased to say, through the leadership that has come forward from the honourable member from Nipissing, we have a tremendous opportunity through new legislation to frame the future. I repeat to the honourable member: The piece of paper that she's waving around certainly is not something that came out of the Liberal Party platform in the last election. That much is clear.

**Ms. Martel:** There's a copy of their brochure, and I've even brought a copy for the minister's benefit today, since he tried to say earlier this week that it wasn't true.

Families and residents in long-term-care homes don't see a change. This is what Donna Rubin had to say, who represents the not-for-profit long-term-care homes in the province, on March 23, 2006: "We're disappointed and, quite frankly, very frustrated. With the province recording higher-than-anticipated tax revenues, we expected the government to make good on its commitment to revolutionize long-term care." Over the last three budgets, the amount of annual funding going directly to care has only increased by about \$2,000, not \$6,000.

Here's what Karen Sullivan of the Ontario Long Term Care Association had to say on April 3, 2006: "It is clear that both families and residents strongly disagree with any perception that government has addressed long-term-

care service levels and that, for them, this is an issue of care, respect and dignity." Minister, your party made a specific promise in the last election to provide an additional \$6,000 of care per resident in every long-term-care home. Why haven't you kept that promise?

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** I'm pleased to remind the honourable member that she's not—

*Interjection.*

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** Yes, that's right. The honourable member may be waving around a random piece of paper; she's certainly not waving around a piece of paper from the Liberal Party campaign platform. I've been clear in saying that, and I'll continue to say it, because I know that I have the facts with me on this.

I want to offer a quote to the honourable member. This comes from close to home for her. This is from the administrator of the Extendicare Falconbridge facility: "I'm just tickled pink we can put that money to good use." The administrator went on to say, "With this extra funding, we'll be able to improve that much more."

Unlike the honourable member's fundamental pessimism, which fuels her every activity in this place, I've had the opportunity, as other members have, to visit long-term-care homes in their own areas, and what I encourage honourable members to do—we have 618 long-term-care homes and, accordingly, people who have concerns about the quality of service that's being provided there are encouraged to call the 1-800 action line. It's up and running, it's effective, it's responsive and it very promptly addresses circumstances that might be occurring. I encourage the honourable member to—

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Thank you.

## TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE

**Mr. Dave Levac (Brant):** My question is for the Minister of Transportation. Minister, after waiting decades, I'm happy to see that our government is taking specific action on highway traffic congestion or gridlock, as it's known. Over the years, I've watched traffic increase as I drive back and forth to my riding of Brant on the QEW. As you know, I'm not alone, and I sit in traffic along the QEW and look around at the frustrated commuters. At times, we've come to a dead stop and do a stop-start crawl along that particular road, and we all know that we need to take a look at alternatives to cars, but realistically, because of our geography, we will still not be a carless society.

Minister, I know you made an announcement yesterday about the improvements of our highway system around the lakes. On behalf of all commuters, I'd like to hear what our government's plans are for the upgrading of the QEW. Minister, if I might, for the sake of safety, I suggest you seriously consider a compass sign on the QEW for westbound travelers before we hit Ford Drive and we stop sitting. Could you cut down on the congestion by letting us know when and where to get off the QEW—



**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** The question has been asked.

**Hon. Harinder S. Takhar (Minister of Transportation):** I want to thank the member from Brant for asking this question. The congestion is of great concern to our government, and that's why we are making considerable investment and showing real leadership on this issue.

Yesterday, I announced a \$1.4-billion investment in our highways that will make sure we can expand the capacity of our highways, do the rehab of our highways and do the environmental assessment necessary to move ahead to make some progress on the congestion issues.

But we do need a balanced approach to handle the congestion issue, and that's why we are making another \$1.2-billion investment under the Move Ontario program, which will see three major projects going into the GTA area. Starting with the QEW, we plan to add another lane on both sides. But before we do that, we need to expand our bridges, both for Bronte Road and also for Sixteen Mile Creek—

**The Speaker:** Thank you, Minister. Supplementary?

**Mrs. Linda Jeffrey (Brampton Centre):** Minister, I had the privilege of attending the groundbreaking ceremony this week on phase 2 of the Highway 410 extension in Brampton. My community is really grateful for this good news. This project has been in the works for 15 years. As Mayor Susan Fennell said, "Actions speak louder than words." She said, "I don't have a lot of respect for people who make announcements and take pictures. If you're not about to do something for the city of Brampton, we'll get somebody who will." Our government's total investment in this project will be \$150 million.

On Monday, the media wanted to know whether the ministry would be in a position to open the highway when the construction on phase 2 is complete. Minister, will my community have to wait until all three phases are complete before we can provide relief to commuters in Peel?

**Hon. Mr. Takhar:** I want to thank the member from Brampton Centre for asking this question. I was very pleased to have her and the other member from Brampton join me on Monday to make this very important announcement on Highway 410.

The second phase of the 410 is going ahead. We have already issued the contract for \$50 million, and the second phase should be completed by October of next year. Then we should be able to open phase 1 and phase 2.

Under the current agreement that we have with the municipalities, all three phases needed to be completed, but the chair of the region of Peel said that the council will be very receptive to opening phase 2 and moving ahead with that.

**Hon. James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, Government House Leader):** What about Highway 406?

**Hon. Mr. Takhar:** That is already done.

## CHILD PROTECTION

**Mrs. Julia Munro (York North):** My question is for the Minister of Children and Youth Services. Yesterday in this House, you told us that Bill 210 will give the Ombudsman the final say on appeals about children in the custody of the CAS that go to the Child and Family Services Review Board. You said he will have jurisdiction over their decisions. Yet the Ombudsman has also written to me just today, telling me that "Bill 210 does not introduce meaningful oversight of children's aid societies." His powers would be "limited to considering whether the board acted in accordance with administrative fairness principles during its procedures."

Protecting children requires more than appeals about administrative issues. Why will you not give the Ombudsman the powers he asked for to investigate underlying problems inside children's aid societies?

**Hon. Mary Anne V. Chambers (Minister of Children and Youth Services):** Bill 210 went through a very thorough process. In fact, as part of second reading, there was significant debate and actually significant amendments that I think have served to strengthen this bill in the interests of children in care. I do know that both the opposition and the third party participated in these debates, participated as members of the standing committee and had full briefings on everything to do with Bill 210. Bill 210 went through third reading and was approved in this Legislature, as per the proper process. What we are doing will provide better protection for kids in care.

**Mrs. Munro:** Just in the last few weeks the Ombudsman wrote a report about the inequities and the problems of the property tax system. Why do you not believe that the Ombudsman should have at least the same investigative powers to protect children at risk as he does to protect property taxpayers?

1510

**Hon. Mrs. Chambers:** As Minister of Children and Youth Services, it goes well beyond my imagination to compare kids to property taxes. What I can assure you is that this government is determined to ensure that children in the care of our child well-being and protection system will be better off, not through any kind of political plays but through good, solid policies and enforcement.

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** New question; the member for Timmins-James Bay.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay):** Interesting answer. She never accepted any of the amendments that dealt with this at committee.

1510

## LIQUOR CONTROL BOARD OF ONTARIO

**Mr. Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay):** Anyway, my question is for the Premier, especially for the Premier. Last election, you were categorical in your support of the Liquor Control Board of Ontario staying in public



hands. Like us, you were opposed to the notion of privatizing the LCBO, but you went one step further. You said during the election that you would stop the expansion of agency stores across the province of Ontario. Now we learn this week that some 20 new agency stores are going to be established in Ontario—

*Applause.*

**Mr. Bisson:** And the government applauds? They're applauding the breaking of their own promise. What an interesting question.

Anyway, this expansion is not in small areas where there are no LCBO outlets available. These are in communities where you've already got LCBO stores, places like Long Beach, North Augusta, Rockton, Oil Springs and others. Premier, why are you breaking your promise from the last election and expanding agency stores, contrary to that promise?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Research and Innovation):** To the Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal.

**Hon. David Caplan (Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal, Deputy Government House Leader):** Back in August, we engaged OPSEU in a process of negotiation around the new collective agreement for the LCBO. During that negotiation, we were very clear with the bargaining agent that this was something we intended to pursue and in fact specific language was put into the contract to allow this. But I should tell you that the appropriate provisions to protect the employees—the 20 agency stores will provide rural economic development in this province, and that's very good news for small-town Ontario—will also ensure that there are no layoffs, that there will be protections for the employees at existing LCBO stores. This is good not only for small-town Ontario but this is good for the treasury of Ontario, good for the LCBO. This is a win-win-win for everybody concerned.

**Mr. Bisson:** How can you say that when the win-win during the election was not to privatize the LCBO and to stop the incursion of agency stores across Ontario? These agency stores being opened aren't out in the middle of a highway somewhere where there isn't already an existing LCBO store. We're talking about communities that already have LCBO stores where you're allowing agency stores to be put in existence less than a kilometre away from the existing ones.

I say to you again—a very simple question: If you were opposed to the expansion of agency stores during the last election, why are you now breaking your promise and allowing this expansion to go on? It's nothing but privatization by the back door.

**Hon. Mr. Caplan:** I take exception to what the member said. No agency store will be in a location where there is another LCBO store. In fact, the specific language in the contract we have signed with the bargaining agent, OPSEU in this case, has a specific provision for a distance requirement from other LCBO stores.

The agency store program has been around since 1962. There's nothing new about this. There are 172

agency stores. I've got to tell you, this is welcome news for small-town Ontario, to see much-needed economic development at a time when we are seeing wonderful expansion right across the province. This is a reasonable policy. This is one that was supported by the New Democrats when they were in government. There is great excitement and anticipation that LCBO outlets, in a limited capacity, will be coming to small-town rural Ontario. We're thrilled with the reception that we're getting so far, and there will be—

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Thank you. New question.

## IMMIGRANT SERVICES

**Ms. Deborah Matthews (London North Centre):** My question's for the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration. Each year, approximately 125,000 immigrants choose to make Ontario their home and over 70% of the adult newcomers have post-secondary education or training. Their value to Ontario is immeasurable.

Though the majority of newcomers choose to settle within the GTA, settlement in other regions of the province is growing. The city of London, for example, saw a 36% increase in newcomer settlement between 2002 and 2004. It's important to our future that this number continues to grow.

Minister, I understand your ministry is working hard with municipalities to market cities throughout Ontario to prospective immigrants. One such initiative provided \$200,000 from your ministry to help London promote itself to newcomers through the new website [ontarioimmigration.ca](http://ontarioimmigration.ca). How will this help London and how will this help prospective newcomers?

**Hon. Mike Colle (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration):** I'd like to thank the member for London North Centre for the question. This investment in London of \$200,000 means that London will be one of the new regional immigration gateways, like Sudbury, like Windsor, like Ottawa. We're saying to new immigrants all over the world, "You can do this now through the website, internationally. You can choose to live in London, invest in London." Immigrant investors and families going to London or Sudbury will be great for Ontario, great for the communities. This investment of \$200,000 in those cities will make them more appealing, more marketable. This is the future.

**Ms. Matthews:** Minister, the Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council, TRIEC, is a multi-stakeholder council that comprises employers, labour and all three levels of government. The council is an excellent program that partners local business, occupational organizations and the three levels of government with newcomers. It provides opportunities to enable individuals to quickly apply their skills, education and experience in Toronto. Given the success of TRIEC in Toronto, does the government have any plans to expand similar programs in other municipalities across Ontario to encourage the regional economic gateways for the success of our newcomers?



**Hon. Mr. Colle:** The Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council is a partnership between employers, between government, and between newcomers where they get opportunities to work in industries in the greater Toronto area. It has worked so well that we are now going to expand this immigration gateway concept into areas all across Ontario. We're going to do it in Ottawa, for example. Kitchener-Waterloo wants to be a gateway for newcomers and immigrants. Also, we've got great uptake from the Niagara region.

For many years, people looked upon immigration as a challenge only. But now they realize that inviting immigrants means you're inviting prosperity, inviting innovation, inviting new expansion in culture, in start-up businesses. So this investment by the government of Ontario in these new immigration gateways is really an investment in economic growth in cities like London, Sudbury, Windsor, Kitchener-Waterloo, Hamilton. Mayor DeCicco of London is excited. Mayor—

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Thank you. Order. Minister, would you sit down, please?

## PETITIONS

### SPEECH AND LANGUAGE SERVICES

**Mr. Frank Klees (Oak Ridges):** I have a petition relating to Better Speech, Language and Hearing Month. It reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas over one million Ontarians of all ages suffer from communication disorders relating to speech, language and/or hearing; and

"Whereas there is a growing need for awareness of the profound developmental, economic and social consequences that communication disorders have on people and their families; and

"Whereas persons with communication problems require access to the professional services of audiologists and speech-language pathologists who provide treatments to improve and enhance quality of life; and

"Whereas effective treatment of communication disorders benefits all of society by allowing otherwise disadvantaged persons to achieve their academic and vocational potentials; and

"Whereas investments in treatments for communication disorders pay economic dividends in reduced reliance on other social services,

"We, the undersigned, in conjunction with the Ontario Association of Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists, call on the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to proclaim the month of May as Better Speech, Language and Hearing Month."

As I had the privilege of introducing that bill earlier today, I'm pleased to affix my signature and support this petition.

1520

### CHILD CARE

**Ms. Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt):** I have a petition that has been sent to me by Larch Street Kids, a child care centre in Sudbury, and it reads as follows:

"Whereas hard-working Ontario families need affordable, accessible, licensed and regulated quality child care for their young children;

"Whereas child care is under threat in Ontario with the possible cancellation of funding agreements with the provinces for child care by the federal Conservative government under Stephen Harper and the failure of the McGuinty Liberal government to put the additional provincial investments into child care, as promised in the 2003 Ontario election campaign;

"Whereas Ontario needs a strong, made-in-Ontario, not-for-profit child care system with or without federal dollars;

"Whereas the province of Quebec is much more able to provide and preserve child care in the face of cancelled federal funding because it has a significant, strong and sustained base of provincial government funding;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the government of Ontario to immediately begin investing the \$300 million to create child care spaces for 330,000 children as promised in the 2003 election campaign."

I agree with the petitioners. I have affixed my signature to this.

### LAND DEVELOPMENT

**Mr. David Zimmer (Willowdale):** I'm pleased to present a petition on behalf of my constituents in Willowdale relating to the changing of an OMB decision on the Churchill-Basswood townhouse development. It reads as follows:

"To the Legislature of Ontario:

"Whereas the people of Willowdale have indicated that they wish to live in safe, pollution-free neighbourhoods unencumbered by hasty and unplanned development; and

"Whereas the people of the Churchill-Basswood" neighbourhood "fear this development will trap their ... detached homes between a high-density redevelopment area to the east and multi-unit housing to the west;

"We petition the Legislature of Ontario to unilaterally reverse this decision and restore the balance in our neighbourhoods."

This petition is 16 pages. I support it, I'm pleased to attach my signature and I give it with page Connor.

### HEALTH PREMIUMS

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman (Oxford):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas, according to the Department of National Defence, there are over 30,000 serving military personnel who call Ontario home; and

"Whereas, according to the most recent census data, there are more than 1.6 million senior citizens over the age of 65 living in Ontario; and

"Whereas the PC Party of Ontario plans on eliminating this illegitimate tax for all Ontarians after it forms the government in 2007; and

"Whereas, as an interim measure, this illegitimate health tax should be removed from those who protect Canada and those who have built Ontario;

"We, the undersigned, call on the government of Ontario to immediately eliminate the province's illegitimate health tax, beginning with serving military personnel and senior citizens."

I affix my signature, as I agree with this petition, along with all the constituents who have signed, many from Oxford county and around Ontario.

#### SPEECH AND LANGUAGE SERVICES

**Mr. Michael Prue (Beaches–East York):** I have a petition that reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas over one million Ontarians of all ages suffer from communication disorders relating to speech, language and/or hearing; and

"Whereas there is a growing need for awareness of the profound developmental, economic and social consequences that communication disorders have on people and their families; and

"Whereas persons with communication problems require access to the professional services of audiologists and speech-language pathologists who provide treatments to improve and enhance quality of life; and

"Whereas effective treatment of communication disorders benefits all of society by allowing otherwise disadvantaged persons to achieve their academic and vocational potentials; and

"Whereas investments in treatments for communication disorders pay economic dividends in reduced reliance on other social services,

"We, the undersigned, in conjunction with the Ontario Association of Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists, call on the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to proclaim the month of May as Better Speech, Language and Hearing Month."

I'm in agreement and will affix my signature thereto.

#### PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

**Mr. Bob Delaney (Mississauga West):** I have a petition here to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario of Ontario, and I'd like to thank Sonny Sansone from Scarborough for collecting the signatures on it. It reads as follows:

"Whereas the health and well-being of all Ontario citizens is of the utmost concern for everyone in the province;

"Whereas to date there is little to no marking on prescription drug bottles in Ontario stating clearly when the drug has past its primary date of use, possibly leading to harmful effects on the health of Ontario citizens;

"We, the undersigned, therefore petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to request that it is made mandatory for the expiration date of prescription drugs to be clearly placed on all prescription drug bottles and containers, as it is for foods products, ensuring that no one accidentally uses them past that date, causing unnecessary and preventable harm."

It's a good idea. I'm pleased to support it, to sign it and to ask page Connor to carry it.

#### HEALTH PREMIUMS

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod (Nepean–Carleton):** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas, according to the Department of National Defence, there are over 30,000 serving military personnel who call Ontario home; and

"Whereas, according to the most recent census data, there are more than 1.6 million senior citizens over the age of 65 living in Ontario; and

"Whereas the PC Party of Ontario plans on eliminating this illegitimate tax for all Ontarians after it forms the government in 2007; and

"Whereas as an interim measure, this illegitimate health tax should be removed from those who protect Canada and those who have built Ontario;

"We, the undersigned, call on the government of Ontario to immediately eliminate the province's illegitimate health tax, beginning with serving military personnel and senior citizens."

Since I support this petition, I'll affix my signature.

#### SPEECH AND LANGUAGE SERVICES

**Mr. Dave Levac (Brant):** I appreciate the opportunity to speak on behalf of the Association of Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas over one million Ontarians of all ages suffer from communication disorders relating to speech, language and/or hearing; and

"Whereas there is a growing need for awareness of the profound developmental, economic and social consequences that communication disorders have on people and their families; and

"Whereas persons with communication problems require access to the professional services of audiologists and speech-language pathologists who provide treatments to improve and enhance quality of life; and

"Whereas effective treatment of communication disorders benefits all of society by allowing otherwise



disadvantaged persons to achieve their academic and vocational potentials; and

"Whereas investments in treatments for communication disorders pay economic dividends in reduced reliance on other social services,

"We, the undersigned, call on the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to proclaim the month of May as Better Speech, Language and Hearing Month."

I do so as a former principal who understands the need.

#### HEALTH PREMIUMS

**Mrs. Christine Elliott (Whitby–Ajax):** A petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas, according to the Department of National Defence, there are over 30,000 serving military personnel who call Ontario home; and

"Whereas, according to the most recent census data, there are more than 1.6 million senior citizens over the age of 65 living in Ontario; and

"Whereas the PC Party of Ontario plans on eliminating this illegitimate tax for all Ontarians after it forms the government in 2007; and

"Whereas, as an interim measure, this illegitimate health tax should be removed from those who protect Canada and those who have built Ontario:

"We, the undersigned, call on the government of Ontario to immediately eliminate the province's illegitimate health tax, beginning with serving military personnel and senior citizens."

I'm pleased to affix my signature in support of this petition.

#### IDENTITY THEFT

**Mr. Tony Ruprecht (Davenport):** "To the Parliament of Ontario and the Minister of Government Services:

"Whereas identity theft is the fastest-growing crime in North America;

"Whereas confidential and private information is being stolen on a regular basis, affecting literally thousands of people;

"Whereas the cost of this crime exceeds billions of dollars;

"Whereas countless hours are wasted to restore one's good credit rating;

"We, the undersigned, demand that Bill 38, which passed the second reading unanimously in ... Ontario ... be brought before committee and that the following issues be included for consideration and debate:

"(1) All consumer reports should be provided in a truncated ... form, protecting our vital private information such as SIN and credit card numbers.

"(2) Should a credit bureau discover that there has been a breach of consumer information, the agency should immediately inform the victimized consumer.

"(3) Credit bureaus should only report inquiries resulting out of actual applications for credit and for no other reasons.

"(4) Credit bureaus should investigate any complaints within 30 days and correct or automatically delete any information found unconfirmed or inaccurate."

Since I agree 100% with this petition, I am delighted to sign it.

1530

#### SPEECH AND LANGUAGE SERVICES

**Mr. Ted Arnott (Waterloo–Wellington):** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas over one million Ontarians of all ages suffer from communication disorders relating to speech, language and/or hearing; and

"Whereas there is a growing need for awareness of the profound developmental, economic and social consequences that communication disorders have on people and their families; and

"Whereas persons with communication problems require access to the professional services of audiologists and speech language pathologists who provide treatments to improve and enhance quality of life; and

"Whereas effective treatment of communication disorders benefits all of society by allowing otherwise disadvantaged persons to achieve their academic and vocational potentials; and

"Whereas investments in treatments for communication disorders pay economic dividends in reduced reliance on other social services;

"We, the undersigned, in conjunction with the Ontario Association of Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists, call on the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to proclaim the month of May as Better Speech, Language and Hearing Month."

I support this petition as well.

#### CHILD CARE

**Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti (Scarborough Southwest):** I have a petition that's addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, prepared by Sonny Sansone, a community activist, at 10 Gordonridge. It reads as follows:

"Whereas the McGuinty government in the last budget committed itself to providing the best possible benefits to single-parent families in Ontario by increasing single-parent family benefits by 15.7% over the 2003-2004 levels;

"Whereas the expenditure on at-risk youth and families will be increased to a total of \$10.3 billion;

"Whereas there still remains no coherent universal child care system in Ontario for working families;

"Whereas Ontario needs to move toward a system that is better planned, coordinated and accountable for all;

"We, the unsigned, therefore applaud the McGuinty government for its initiatives at making the lives of

Ontario's families better and ask that they continue to make it the best possible for all families in Ontario."

I agree with this petition, affix my signature to it and give it to page Kelsey, here with me today.

### PIT BULL LEGISLATION

**Mr. Tim Hudak (Erie-Lincoln):** I'm pleased to present a petition from 3,747 taxpayers across Ontario, gathered by the Golden Horseshoe American Pit Bull Terrier Club, among others. I commend Sandra Alway for all her work. It reads as follows:

"Whereas

"The new amendments to the Dog Owners' Liability Act are not effective solutions to the problem of dog attacks; and

"The problem of dog attacks is best dealt with through a comprehensive program of education, training and legislation encouraging responsible ownership of all breeds;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to amend the Dog Owners' Liability Act by removing the breed-specific sections and adding Courtney's Law, in honour of Courtney Trempe. This law would protect citizens from all dog attacks, regardless of breed, by targeting a dog's previous inappropriate behaviour and the owner's inability to properly train, contain and socialize their dog.

"We respectfully request that the assembly create a dangerous dog registry to accurately record dog bites across the province and to properly track offending dogs.

"We also request that the assembly financially support a province-wide dog bite prevention program aimed at dog owners...."

I sign in support of this petition.

### GO TRANSIT TUNNEL

**Mr. Tony Ruprecht (Davenport):** I have a petition that was given to me by Connie Lamanna and Claude Bergeron. They're both from the St. Clair West Revitalization Committee. The petition reads as follows:

"Whereas GO Transit is presently planning to tunnel an area just south of St. Clair Avenue West and west of Old Weston Road, making it easier for GO trains to pass a major rail crossing;

"Whereas TTC is presently planning a TTC right-of-way along all of St. Clair Avenue West, including the bottleneck caused by the dilapidated St. Clair-Old Weston Road bridge;

"Whereas this bridge (underpass) will be: (1) too narrow ... (2) it is not safe ... and (3) it creates a divide, a no man's land, between Old Weston Road and Keele Street....

"Therefore we, the undersigned, demand that GO Transit extend the tunnel beyond St. Clair Avenue West so that trains will pass under St. Clair Avenue West, thus eliminating this eyesore of a bridge with its high banks and blank walls. Instead it will create a dynamic,

revitalized community enhanced by a beautiful continuous cityscape with easy traffic flow."

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for giving me the time to present this petition to you.

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### RESIDENTIAL TENANCIES ACT, 2006

##### LOI DE 2006 SUR LA LOCATION À USAGE D'HABITATION

Resuming the debate adjourned on May 15, 2006, on the motion for second reading of Bill 109, An Act to revise the law governing residential tenancies / Projet de loi 109, Loi révisant le droit régissant la location à usage d'habitation.

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Pursuant to the order of the House dated May 16, 2006, I am now required to put the question.

On May 9, Mr. Gerretsen moved second reading of Bill 109, An Act to revise the law governing residential tenancies. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour will say "aye."

All those opposed will say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 10-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1535 to 1545.*

**The Speaker:** All those in favour will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

#### Ayes

Arthurs, Wayne	Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Patten, Richard
Bartolucci, Rick	Fonseca, Peter	Peters, Steve
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Gerretsen, John	Phillips, Gerry
Bradley, James J.	Hoy, Pat	Pupatello, Sandra
Broten, Laurel C.	Jeffrey, Linda	Qaadri, Shafiq
Brownell, Jim	Kwinter, Monte	Racco, Mario G.
Bryant, Michael	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Ramal, Khalil
Cansfield, Donna H.	Leal, Jeff	Ramsay, David
Caplan, David	Levac, Dave	Rinaldi, Lou
Chambers, Mary Anne V.	Marsales, Judy	Ruprecht, Tony
Colle, Mike	Mathews, Deborah	Sandals, Liz
Cordiano, Joseph	Mauro, Bill	Smith, Monique
Craitor, Kim	McNeely, Phil	Van Bommel, Maria
Delaney, Bob	Meilleur, Madeleine	Watson, Jim
Di Cocco, Caroline	Milloy, John	Wilkinson, John
Dombrowsky, Leona	Mitchell, Carol	Wong, Tony C.
Duguid, Brad	Mossop, Jennifer F.	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Duncan, Dwight	Oraziotti, David	Zimmer, David

**The Speaker:** All those opposed will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

#### Nays

Amott, Ted	Kormos, Peter	Prue, Michael
Bisson, Gilles	MacLeod, Lisa	Runciman, Robert W.
Dunlop, Garfield	Marchese, Rosario	Scott, Laurie
Elliott, Christine	Martel, Shelley	Tabuns, Peter
Hampton, Howard	Martiniuk, Gerry	Wilson, Jim
Hardeman, Ernie	Miller, Norm	Witmer, Elizabeth
Hudak, Tim	Munro, Julia	Yakubuski, John
Klees, Frank	O'Toole, John	



**The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Claude L. DesRosiers):** The ayes are 54; the nays are 23.

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

Pursuant to the order of the House dated May 16, this bill is referred to the standing committee on general government.

1550

## CLEAN WATER ACT, 2006

### LOI DE 2006 SUR L'EAU SAINE

Resuming the debate adjourned on May 15, 2006, on the motion for second reading of Bill 43, An Act to protect existing and future sources of drinking water and to make complementary and other amendments to other Acts / Projet de loi 43, Loi visant à protéger les sources existantes et futures d'eau potable et à apporter des modifications complémentaires et autres à d'autres lois.

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Order. There are too many conversations going on in here. Could we take them outside, please?

Further debate?

**Mr. Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina):** I'm happy to have 10 minutes to speak to this bill. It's not much. I'm happy to welcome the citizens of Ontario who are watching this political channel. We're on live. It's 10 to 4 and it's May 17, so you know the time.

We are pleased to see that the government finally introduced its long-overdue source protection legislation into the House. By way of history, the government first posted a draft bill for the Clean Water Act on the Environmental Bill of Rights in June 2004. At that time, the Minister of the Environment stated that her intent was to have legislation in the House by the end of the year. She then promised source water protection legislation by the spring of 2005. So here it is, a year later, and we're just getting our first opportunity to debate the proposed legislation.

This history is important because every day individuals, municipal councils, conservation authorities and the provincial government make decisions that impact the sources of our drinking water. You will recall that Justice Dennis O'Connor recognized this importance when he introduced the idea that source water protection plans be developed for all watersheds in Ontario because, in his words, "Watersheds are an ecologically practical unit for managing water. This is the level at which impacts to water resources are integrated, and individual impacts that might not be significant in and of themselves combine to create cumulative stresses that may become evident...."

This is important, I tell you, as a bill. I remind you that we are very concerned about this government and this bill and its history around many of the promises this government has made in the past.

You might recall the Oak Ridges moraine and the broken promise around that. We'll recall that one of the McGuinty government's first broken promises was the

failure to stop the development of 6,600 houses slated for development on the Oak Ridges moraine, the same moraine that is crucial to the protection of the headwaters of 35 GTA river systems, many flowing into Lake Ontario, and the drinking water of 250,000 GTA residents.

This is just one example showing that protecting source waters has not been a priority for the McGuinty government right from the start.

Recall as well the big pipe. Just last week the McGuinty government said it would allow York region's big pipe trunk sewer project to cut across the Oak Ridges moraine, which now forms part of the government's greenbelt. Despite alternative routes for the big pipe, the McGuinty government decided to contravene the spirit of the Oak Ridges moraine act, keep their developer friends happy and run the big pipe right through the moraine.

By refusing to stop the big pipe and require a full environmental assessment of its environmental impacts, despite calls from the city of Toronto and Ontario's Environmental Commissioner to do so, the McGuinty government showed its true colours on source water protection. Developers and urban sprawl take precedence over protecting our source water. It's difficult to take claims about protecting source water seriously from a government that fails to keep its promises with respect to development on the Oak Ridges moraine, and then allows one of the largest dewaterings in Canadian history to occur without a full environmental assessment. On the ground, streams and wells have dried up, 120 wells to date. So much for protecting drinking water.

Recall the promise that Monsieur McGuinty made, and I've got to rush through them, because there's so much to say on this bill and so little time. Here's one of McGuinty's quotes, so important to me as it relates to this bill, and he made this promise in 2003:

"We will stop allowing companies to raid our precious water supplies.

"Companies that want to take oil from the ground or trees from the forest have to pay for that privilege. The quantity of resource they can extract or harvest is regulated in line with provincial needs and environmental protection.

"But when companies want to bottle our water or export it as part of other products, the Harris-Eves government gives it to them free and without any consideration of the impact on local aquifers.

"One company alone wants to ship more water out of Ontario annually in the form of industrial slurry than the entire country exports in all beverages.

"We will end this reckless giveaway. Before we issue a single new water-taking permit, we will review Ontario's groundwater supplies. Once we are sure we have enough for ourselves, we will make water-bottling companies and others who mix water with their exports pay for this precious resource."

There's not one mention of this, yet another broken promise, in this bill. Companies will be able to draw water out of our ground and ship it to wherever they want, make money, as much as they want, and we as a



province say, "We are not going to charge you for any of it." People say, "Ah, we don't want to deal with this, because we're commodifying water," but we are commodifying water. They're taking the water out of our ground, and we're saying we're not going to charge them for it. McGuinty said that would never happen under his watch, and now we've got a bill in this House that says nothing about whether or not we're going to charge the companies that suck the water out of our earth. They make money, and we say it's okay; we're not going to charge them a cent. God bless, and God bless for yet another broken promise from Monsieur McGuinty on this file.

What about the Great Lakes? By the way, as a Torontonian, our source water comes from there, and what does this government say about this bill and about the Great Lakes? Here's what it says. John, for your benefit, here's what it says: "The minister may establish one or more advisory committees to provide advice ... on any matter relating to the use of the Great Lakes as a source of drinking water." Great comfort to me and to Torontonians. "The minister may" also "direct a source protection authority to prepare ... a report ... on the use of the Great Lakes as a source of drinking water." Is that what you mean, John, by, "It's there"?

Then it says that the minister may require targets in terms of water quantity or quality be set for the source protection areas emptying into the Great Lakes. If targets are set, the minister may require source protection authorities to prepare a report recommending how targets can be achieved. What's in this bill about source protection of water of the Great Lakes that I drink from, when this government, through this bill, says it may do this, may do that, may do another thing, and it doesn't oblige them to do anything? I wait for the Liberals to tell me what it can do, what it's doing, what's there in the bill that protects—Johnny, I'm waiting for you.

On the whole issue of municipalities, municipalities are going to get stuck with a bill decentralizing control over the implementation, monitoring and enforcement of SPPs, which could prove problematic, we argue, and in many instances in which provincially underfunded municipalities have to choose between protecting future impacts on source water or new development and an increased tax base, they will choose the latter. Municipalities are going to get stuck with the bill, and the government doesn't say whether or not they're going to help them out. This will be another dumping of yet another responsibility for municipalities to protect our water supply, and there's nothing here that's going to reassure me or the municipalities that this is going to happen.

We are going to make sure that this bill, when it gets to committee, is going to have the appropriate amendments that it needs to get me to support it, because I tell you, as of this moment, this bill is so porous that Mr. Marchese doesn't want to support it. We will be seeking amendments at committee to strengthen the Clean Water Act so as to ensure our source waters have a high degree of integrated protection, human health is properly safeguarded, and long-term funding is provided to ensure

the proper administration and renewal of source water protection planning over time.

That's what we are going to demand in committee. If we do not get the amendments that we are going to force in committee, then I will tell you this: This bill that we've been expecting, this water bill that would protect source water, is not much to be proud of—a typical Liberal bill that gives so little. We will be fighting for stronger amendments, and we'll see whether the government is going to approve them or disapprove them in committee.

1600

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. John Milloy):** It's time for questions and comments.

**Mr. Jim Wilson (Simcoe-Grey):** I just want to put on the record that four weeks ago I met with the Christian Farmers, along with—I'm sorry; I can't remember the riding names at the moment—Simcoe North, Garfield Dunlop, and Joe Tascona for Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford. They're very concerned, as are many other farmers. Again, two weeks ago in my riding I met with a cross-section of farmers representing various commodity groups from the farming sector. It's the cost that's associated with this. I'm a former Minister of the Environment, and a number of these things we were going to bring forward during Ernie Eves's time as Premier, but we were having the fight in cabinet in terms of finding the dollars to support our farm community.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, we're probably in the second worst, if not the worst, farm financial crisis right now in the province. The viability of the family farm is very much [*Failure of sound system*]. Farmers simply can't afford a number of things that are in this piece of legislation, so I don't want to support it at this time. I'm with Mr. Marchese in terms of feeling we need to see a program come forward to support our farming community, because this bill is extremely onerous in terms of source water protection. It may put some farmers out of business. I have one farmer who's on well number five in the town of New Tecumseth, and depending on how far away the source water protection, how big an area around it is defined in terms of spreading pesticides and manure and that, he actually may not be able to farm, because his well is on the corner of four fields, and if it goes 300 metres this way or 100 metres that way, he's pretty well out of farming, which is kind of an unusual circumstance, I know.

Anyway, before the government comes forward with the regulations and implementation of this legislation, it's extremely important that they come forward with a program to make this affordable for our farming community. That's in addition to the risk management program and other program supports that the farmers are asking for now. So I ask the government to be cautious and to be courteous to our farming community in this regard.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further questions and comments? The member for Perth-Middlesex.

**Mr. John Wilkinson (Perth-Middlesex):** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and my, you look fine in that chair, sir, for your first time.



I just want to say briefly—because I think this debate is to the point where we need to get this bill to committee, and I think we all agree to that. But I say to the member for Simcoe–Grey, one of your colleagues, the member from Haldimand–Norfolk, I think bandied about some \$7-billion number that this was going to cost. As a former Minister of the Environment, if you'd like to table anything with our government as to what you think the actual cost is, I'd be quite interested to see that, sir, since you seem to know about that. Your government, you said, struggled with that number.

I say to my friend from Trinity–Spadina, we look forward to meeting with you in committee, sir. You made great comments about science. This bill is based on science. It's based on consultation. It's based on the fact that the bill cannot happen unless it is based on science or we will not get the buy-in from all of the people. But what we do know is that all of the people in this province expect to have clean drinking water. That is our criterion. I say to you that I believe that, working together in committee, this bill will be one that all members of this House will be proud to support on third and final reading.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further questions and comments? Seeing none, the member has two minutes to respond.

**Mr. Marchese:** At the moment, member from Perth–Middlesex, we are glad you introduced this bill. I'm not very proud of it yet. We'll look at the amendments that we will introduce and hopefully the amendments you will introduce and then we will tell you whether or not we're going to be proud of the bill, but at the moment it's a very weak, porous bill.

The member from Simcoe–Grey raises concerns that are of interest to us too, to see how they are going to be addressed. Like municipalities, farmers are concerned about the costs imposed by the source protection plan on affected landowners and would like to see a fund to offset new costs of compliance. Is that a reasonable request? We should reflect on that.

With regard to inspectors, farm organizations want all inspectors entering farms to comply with all biosafety protocols of the property owner. This becomes even more crucial as diseases like the bird flu threaten agriculture as well as human life. These are concerns that we need to address.

As well, we need to address that we have no idea how the source water protection committees—the 16 members, all told—are going to be selected. Like so many other aspects of this bill, it is left to regulation who these people are. How they're going to be appointed will significantly impact on the quality of source water protection plans and, potentially, water quality within the watershed. These are important concerns that we will raise that need to be dealt with in committee.

I tell you, unless we strengthen the language around the whole idea of how we protect source water from the Great Lakes, people like me are going to be very unhappy. "The minister may establish" advisory committees. "The minister may direct a source protection

authority" to prepare a report on the use of the Great Lakes. It's not good enough.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Ms. Jennifer F. Mossop (Stoney Creek):** I rise to contribute to this debate on clean water, probably one of the most important things that we can debate in this Legislature, quite frankly. We talk about a lot of things in this chamber, things that affect many people all over this province, but rarely do we talk about something as important as clean water and clean air. If you don't have clean water and you don't have clean air, you have nothing; you have absolutely nothing. So this is probably one of the most important discussions we that can have.

When I ran for election in 2003, it was in a province that had changed quite a bit, and it had changed so drastically that people had lost faith in their drinking water supply. They would turn on their kitchen tap and look at the water coming out of that tap with skepticism, with tremendous concern and even with fear. That was in the province of Ontario, in Canada, not a Third World country. That is the atmosphere that was surrounding the population of Ontario at that time. So to be discussing clean water, to be bringing forth measures that are taking a more thorough and cohesive approach to making sure that we have clean water in this province, and making sure that it dovetails with other initiatives that we are taking, with our spills bill and with other initiatives coming out of our environment ministry—I'm pointing over here to our parliamentary assistant to the Minister of the Environment, John Wilkinson, who spoke just a moment ago, who I know has been working very hard on all these initiatives.

I just can't think of anything more important. As I say, without clean air and clean water, we have nothing. That is what we need as a species to survive on this planet. It is absolutely basic; it is essential. So we can talk about great schools, hospitals and economic development—we can talk about all these things—but without clean air and clean water, we have nothing to talk about.

I am very supportive of this initiative, of this bill. Because it dovetails in with a number of other things, it does not come completely on its own. We have been working with the Nutrient Management Act and also the spills bill. This is something that is very good for local communities to protect their intake of water, especially if we're looking at places around the Great Lakes.

For many years, as a journalist I worked in the Niagara area when there was a lot of concern with what was pouring into the Niagara River—poisons that were coming into the Niagara River from the other side of the border and also just from sewage systems that were not properly repaired—and how we were able to monitor the quality and the safety of that water supply that's supplying several million people just on this side of the border, not to mention the other side of the border as well.

We've also backed this up with a number of initiatives in terms of financial support for this. We think that your local communities are actually the people who are going



to have to be working on this. They are the ones who need to have control and support for this, so we have provided quite a bit of financial support. We've committed \$67 million to fund the source water protection research by conservation authorities and municipalities.

1610

Conservation authorities were doing a lot of very good work a long time ago. They lost the ability to do that because their budgets were gutted under the previous government, but they actually were doing some tremendous work around our source water. I'm glad to see that they are back in the business of doing that. They should be doing that, and that's great.

We also announced almost \$10 million in grants for municipalities to conduct scientific studies to support source water protection efforts. That's tremendously important. These grants also build on more than \$12.5 million previously provided to enable conservation authorities and municipalities all across the province to build capacity and to develop initial water budgets. We're doing this in stages, and we're building on it. The municipalities will have tools they need to develop and implement local plans to protect the sources of the water their residents drink, and the result will be cleaner, safer water supplies all throughout this province. This hugely important.

We need to ensure that the legislation we propose supports the viability and the prosperity of all people in Ontario, and that's what it is trying to do. It is a very visionary piece. It takes a global look at what we're doing. As I say, there is nothing more important that we could be talking about in this chamber than our clean water and clean air. I am very proud that this government has come forward with a comprehensive plan, this being part of it, to protect our environment, because that is what will sustain us as a species. We have to have clean air. We have to have clean water.

I'm very proud and will be supporting this bill as it moves through the House under the shepherding of the Minister of the Environment, and the parliamentary assistant also, John Wilkinson.

**The Acting Speaker:** Questions and comments? Seeing no questions and comments, further debate? The member from Erie-Lincoln.

*Applause.*

**Mr. Tim Hudak (Erie-Lincoln):** Thank you very kindly.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Hudak:** I have a few comments to share on Bill 43 this afternoon; I've had a chance to address some of these issues before. I'm going to comment a little bit on the bill itself, and comment on an important local issue related to Bill 43.

First and foremost, let me commend the hard work of our critic for the environment. Laurie Scott has done an outstanding job in bringing this issue to the fore, in asking questions, in statements here in the Legislature, helping caucus members in the PC caucus understand the implications of Bill 43.

I think in a general sense all of us here in the assembly support the objective of clean water. How can you vote against clean water or apple pie?

**Hon. David Caplan (Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal, Deputy Government House Leader):** We'll see.

**Mr. Hudak:** Don't tell me the apple pie bill is coming next. You have the Clean Water Act, you have the I love Toronto act, and next you're going to have the motherhood and apple pie act.

We are very concerned and look forward to an opportunity in committee to taking a better look at how the Ministry of the Environment plans on implementing Bill 43. I think a fair critique of the approach of the government to date is that it fails to indicate where the financial resources are going to come from to support the mandate under Bill 43. That's in two senses: first, to municipalities—how are municipalities going to be able to afford a number of these projects? I'll get to one specifically in my riding momentarily—second, to the farmers and other rural landowners. They may face a substantial burden upon them. It's already in many commodities a crisis time in agriculture.

My colleague from Simcoe-Grey spoke very well earlier about the importance of supporting farmers who will have significant obligations under this act. He met with the Christian farmers of Ontario; certainly, they have strong representation in the riding of Erie-Lincoln as well. I know the OFA has made some very strong comments regarding their concerns on Bill 43's implementation. As I said earlier, they support the concept of clean water, obviously, but have great concern about the approach of the McGuinty government to date on this issue. The last time I had a chance to speak to this bill, I did actually discuss an article in *Better Farming*. Albert Witteveen, who is a councillor in the township of West Lincoln, in which I reside—Albert is an intelligent, hardworking individual, a municipal councillor and farmer, and he has been the president of the OFA North—has had some very interesting comments, as has John Kikkert, whom I quoted from last time around.

**Mr. Jeff Leal (Peterborough):** He likes the Homestead Act too.

**Mr. Hudak:** I think sensible, reasonable individuals do.

But let me get on to some particular concerns about this. From time to time, I do like to track the record of the McGuinty government's ability to keep its own promises. I will say to my colleague the hardworking parliamentary assistant—

**Mr. Wilkinson:** You don't have 10 minutes on Bill 43, do you?

**Mr. Hudak:** Oh, yes, this is about Bill 43—absolutely. What they say on page 14 of the Liberal Party platform—we did find a copy; it was buried under some of those houses on the Oak Ridges moraine. We dug it up, we found a copy of the Liberal Party platform, and page 14, as we shook the dust off, said:



"We will implement every recommendation of the Walkerton inquiry.

"We will fast-track provincial financial support for rural communities to improve their water and sewer infrastructure."

With respect to the Walkerton inquiry—what they mean specifically there is the O'Connor report—there are still a number of recommendations that have not been followed through on by this government related to Bill 43, specifically recommendations 13, 14, 15 and 16 of the O'Connor report. I know my colleague will be working hard to ensure that that promise will be kept. We will be watching to ensure that they actually do keep this promise. We heard about another one today, with respect to agency stores—another broken Dalton McGuinty promise. Let's hope there aren't two in the same day.

I want to say that the previous government, in bringing forth legislation such as the Safe Drinking Water Act, helped to implement more than 50 of Justice O'Connor's recommendations following his investigation of Walkerton. I think the Ministry of the Environment now claims it is up to 60. So I guess there have been 10 additional recommendations implemented, but it certainly is falling well short of Dalton McGuinty's campaign promise to implement them in their entirety.

I do want to also call the attention of my friend and colleague the member from Perth-Middlesex and parliamentary assistant to the fact that Bill 175, which was passed in 2002, has yet to be proclaimed. I know they're hard at work on regulations with respect to safe drinking water. Hopefully they will be in the public domain shortly and we will see that bill proclaimed. I find it passing strange that in opposition Dalton McGuinty made much of this bill and said that he embraced it. But now, almost four years later, we have not seen that bill reach the proclamation stage. I would strongly encourage my colleagues opposite to do so.

The other point I wanted to bring—I know my colleague the Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal brought forward the Swain report back in July 2005; Watertight was the name of it. Swain lead that expert panel to look at a number of proposals surrounding the investment financing, pricing, organization and governance of the province's water and waste water systems. I have no doubt that my colleague and friend the Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal has been pushing very hard at the cabinet table to come to some decisions on Swain's Watertight report, whether they will embrace it in its entirety, aspects of it, what have you. I know that municipalities, farm organizations, groups like the Ontario Sewer and Watermain Construction Association and others would like to know exactly what the minister is going to do with respect to the Swain report. I could make a bad joke here and say that perhaps they've put it in a watertight safe and tossed it to the bottom of Lake Ontario, that that's what's happened with the Swain report. I suggest, though, that's just a very bad pun and in fact the minister is working diligently on advancing that. But I do want to say to him one last time that we're

anxious to hear how you're actually going to reply to the Swain report from July 2005. If the government is truly committed to clean water, I would expect both of those things to move a lot more quickly than they have to date; we'd have some clear answers on Swain and we'd see proclamation of Bill 175.

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In the remainder of my comments, I do want to concentrate on a particularly important project in my riding, which is the Wainfleet water and sewer project. It's been mentioned by myself in the assembly on a number of occasions. I thank the Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal, who met the with Mayor Gord Harry and medical officer of health Robin Williams from Niagara to discuss this project.

**Hon. Mr. Caplan:** Ian Neville.

**Mr. Hudak:** Ian Neville as well has shown strong leadership in the region.

Unfortunately, we've had two sets of non-answers through the COMRIF program. I don't think we're holding out much hope for round 3, given how much money is left in the till, so to speak, and the value of the project. I certainly encourage the minister and his colleagues opposite to support the project. It is needed and is simply unaffordable to Wainfleet residents on their own, or the region of Niagara for that matter. I know that not much money is left for the third round.

I want to say that I would like to see that money spent for this project, but we need to be realistic: The funds remaining may not match up with the need in the Wainfleet area, and if not, then I would ask the minister, the Minister of the Environment and the parliamentary assistant to kindly work with the region of Niagara. Mayor Gord Harry from Wainfleet has shown very strong leadership on this to try to find a plan B.

There was \$7 million set aside from the previous PC government's SuperBuild program. Sadly, it was not matched by the federal government. I do hope that that money will still be invested in this project and that we'll see further funds from this provincial government and from the federal government, but if the system cannot be funded en masse, the least we could do is try to address it in some fashion. Mayor Harry, for example, has suggested the sewage side and Mayor Rigby of St. Catharines has said the same: As a priority, you've got to sever the project.

I appreciate my colleagues' attention to this matter to date and encourage them to help out the people of Wainfleet in addressing this important need.

**The Acting Speaker:** Questions and comments? Further debate?

**Mr. Gilles Bisson (Timmings-James Bay):** I've been looking forward to this all week. I was up at night; I was getting my speech ready. I wrote a speech: It was two hours long, but we're not going to have enough time because we're down to 10-minute speeches.

First of all, I want to start this particular presentation on this bill by saying that a little earlier, as the member from Erie-Lincoln was speaking, there was a little bit of



an omen. There was thunder and lightning outside, and I swear to God, sitting there with the minister of infrastructure, the guy with all the money who's trying to fund Moosonee and trying to fund problems in the city of Timmins—we heard and we swear that we saw lightning hit the lightning rod on the Parliament Building as the member from Erie—Lincoln was speaking. It was a sign from the heavens—

**Mr. Marchese:** Eerie.

**Mr. Bisson:** It was very eerie, I must say—

**Mr. Marchese:** From the member for Erie.

**Mr. Bisson:** —to the member from Erie, that at that particular time lightning struck, as you spoke. You're one of the few members I've known in my 16 years here who can say that, as you gave your speech, lightning struck the Parliament Building of Ontario.

I want to put a couple of things on the record in this particular debate, because I want people to clearly understand what this bill does and doesn't do. We, as New Democrats, have always, always taken the position that we need to have source water protection. For that, we support the government to a degree. I just want to state very clearly to what degree we don't support the government, because we don't think that this bill goes to the degree that it needs to in order to protect source water.

Most of you will remember my good colleague Marilyn Churley when she was here. She was our minister in our government but also our critic on the environment, and was a very strong advocate on the issue of source water protection. In co-operation with her colleagues in our caucus, people within the party, our caucus staff and stakeholders in the province, she developed and introduced in this Legislature a number of times source water protection legislation that would have gone to the degree of making sure that we protect all source water. That's the point I want to make in this particular debate.

This legislation starts off in the right direction; I'm going to give the government a little bit of credit.

*Applause.*

**Mr. Bisson:** No applause; hang on. I don't want to be in one of your leaflets saying I support Liberals. I just say it doesn't go to the degree it needs to to protect all water.

Now, what does the bill do? The bill deals mostly with what, I guess in layman's terms, you can say is well water. It deals mostly with protecting water that is drawn from wells and such. That is a good thing. I'm not sure that it goes to the degree it needs to in that area. But it doesn't deal with where much of the province draws its drinking water. For example, we don't deal with the Great Lakes in this legislation, something that, quite frankly, seems to me like a simple oversight or a catastrophic oversight, depending on which way you look at it, because many communities in Ontario draw their drinking water from the Great Lakes. If we're going to talk about source water protection, we need to talk about all sources and not just some sources. That's one of the points I want to make in this debate.

I would say to the government that we will give qualified support to this bill. We're going to allow the

bill to go to second reading and we will give you qualified support in the sense that we need to make sure, when this bill gets to committee, that we're able to make the amendments necessary to make sure we protect all source water. For example, we have some serious concerns about how narrow the scope of this bill is as it applies to protecting other sources of water. It doesn't deal, as I said in my opening comments, with all particular sources.

We're also concerned about the lack of protection for the Great Lakes, as I talked about. I'm just looking at my note to make sure I didn't forget anything. Colin, our NDP researcher, would be very cross with me. If I walk out of this Legislature and I don't read all his notes, Colin, our good researcher in the NDP, is going to say that I forgot. So, Colin, I want to make sure you know that I'm reading your note.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Bisson:** I never read speeches. That's why Colin gets cross with me, because I don't believe in reading speeches. I find it breaks the rhythm of what you're trying to do. But I think I covered the point.

The point I want to make is simply this: While we go to committee, we need to make sure that we give people who are more knowledgeable about source water protection than you and I an opportunity to come before committee. At that committee, we're looking forward to the recommendations made by those people who are experts, who can come before us and say what source water protection legislation should look like.

We're saying, as New Democrats, we are totally in favour of source water protection. In fact, we have championed this issue for a number of years. We acknowledge that the government has taken a baby step forward—and I say it's a baby step; it's not a giant step, it's a baby one—of protecting some of our source water as it deals with wells. But it doesn't deal with much of the source water that is drawn from areas, such as the Great Lakes and others, that need to be protected to make sure we safeguard water for all Ontarians, not just for some Ontarians.

As you well know, I represent a part of the province, unfortunately, that has had a lot of experience with bad water as far as source water protection. A good example of that is what happened in Kashechewan. There was a situation where that community draws its water from a creek that dumps into the Albany River, but the sewage lagoon is just upstream on the creek and leaking and sieving into the water, contaminating the water that was drawn into the water plant. That kind of situation needs to be protected in this legislation, so that we look at those effects.

We say to ourselves, "Does it make sense for the federal or provincial government"—whoever might be responsible; more times than not it's the province—"to design a sewage lagoon plant that is upstream on the same source as the water that is being drawn in the community for drinking water?" I think the answer should be no. That's why I've always argued that the federal government should get out of the business of



water, because certainly when you look at Kashechewan and other examples, they've had an abysmal record when it comes to making sure that water in First Nations as it's drawn and treated is safe.

If we look at the communities in the NAN territory, over 60% of the communities are under boil-water advisories. You can't drink the water. In some cases, such as Kashechewan, it made people terribly ill. I will say in this Legislature, I think people have died—seriously. The problem is that often there are no autopsies done when young people die, or in some cases when elderly people or sick people who have other conditions die—when, as a complication to their original illness, drinking water that might have caused the death is a secondary cause of death. Part of the problem in many of our First Nations communities is there's not an automatic autopsy. I would think it's not much of a stretch to say that the water in those communities has led to deaths in those communities. I want to make sure in this Legislature and in this legislation that we capture all source water so that we put all Ontarians in the same boat; we make sure that we protect source water, because that's one of the fundamentals. You have to know as an Ontario citizen that when you go to the tap and draw water from the tap, you can drink it and you're not going to die or get sick. That's something that I think we can all agree on in this Legislature, no matter what party it is. We want to make sure, in a non-partisan way, that we deal with this issue effectively to make sure that all Ontarians who draw water from the tap know and have the security of knowing that the water they're going to drink or cook with or wash with is not going to cause them ill effect or death, as was the case in Walkerton.

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So I say to my friends on the government side and I say to the parliamentary assistant, who stole my intern—I want to say I'm not holding any grudges. It was your turn. I'm all for sharing, but Mark was really good, and I would have liked to have kept him in my office a little longer, because he was very big on source water protection, as you well know. I just say to my good friend Mr. Wilkinson, who is the parliamentary assistant, we will give you conditional support at second reading because we believe this is an important issue to deal with. Then, at committee, we want the amendments necessary to make sure that we cover off source water protection at all areas, not just when we talk about wells and others.

**The Acting Speaker:** I thank the honourable member for his comments. Questions and comments? Further debate?

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod (Nepean–Carleton):** I appreciate the opportunity to speak to this bill. Protecting our water supply is vital to everyone. This is a very noble piece of legislation.

I would like to read into the record a few comments and questions from some of my constituents. As you know, I have a large rural component to my riding, and some of the farmers and landowners have some questions. I'd like to put them into the record today, so

hopefully at committee these issues or questions and concerns can be addressed.

My good friend Marlene Black, who is a farmer in Nepean–Carleton and lives in Goulbourn township, has a series of comments. She's afraid that this bill further restricts what a rural landowner and farmer can and cannot do. She's concerned that there's not a lot of detail on what the restrictions will be and how they will be implemented. She also has an interesting concern:

"The bill takes priority over other bills and acts. The Greenbelt Act also takes precedence over other bills." So she would like to know which takes priority over what. "It does state that if there is a conflict, then the most severe regulation will prevail." She finds this a little odd and a strange way to enact legislation, namely, that whatever is the most severe will prevail. "The concern here is that complying with one set of regulations, and then being forced through a more restrictive act to remedy and meet the more stringent criterion is time-consuming, costly and ... duplicative.

"Although the details are not known, the fact that there are fees, fees and more fees, is very clear," she says. "For many farmers and rural landowners the financial lemon has been oversqueezed. It is time that the beneficiaries of the legislation paid for the costs of the legislation, rather than the usual minority 'stakeholder' who is negatively affected."

She doesn't know "the specific regulations that will result from the act; however there is every possibility that there may be farm restrictions"—I'd like to know from members opposite if indeed that's going to be the case—"in certain, yet to be determined areas, which will limit or curtail farming." As you know, in Nepean–Carleton, that's very important to many of my residents.

"There must be fair compensation for this curtailment. Again, the act and regulations are put in place for the benefit of all Ontarians, hence all Ontarians must compensate for the loss of property enjoyment, loss of income, loss of farming capability that may likely occur." So we'd be interested in seeing some results there.

Further on, on the compensation issue:

"The principle of just compensation must be agreed to now and respected by the government as it takes away more rights from the main stakeholder who will bear the cost of the restrictions. When the detailed regulations are implemented the amounts of compensation and those to be compensated must be just."

Just a quick comment from her on the public process: She believes that the timing for the public input has been short. As I understand it, there will be hearings. We look forward, hopefully, to inviting you to Nepean–Carleton—

*Interjection.*

**Ms. MacLeod:** Two and a half years? Well, I've not even been here two and a half months, so consider this input from Nepean–Carleton. We'd like to invite you to talk about the Clean Water Act in Nepean–Carleton, if you'd like to come.

We would like to see the public input process expanded.

We're concerned in Nepean–Carleton that the act seems to give some bureaucrats a little bit more power, and that's a legitimate concern from some of my residents. So I just submit this to you today.

There's a concern here for untreated sewage into the lakes. There is no mention in the act regarding water quality of one of the prime sources of southern Ontario drinking water, namely the lakes. We're concerned with cities dumping untreated or ill-treated sewage into the lakes at various times. There is no accountability anywhere in the act. So we'd like to see that looked at.

I have just one more concern over normal farm practices. There are conflicts at this time between normal farm practices and acceptability of normal farm practices by towns, cities and urban people. There have been bylaws enunciated by various urban councils that limit or eliminate certain normal farm practices, and Bill 43's enforcement, directed by municipalities, will allow the restriction of normal farm practices under the guise of source water protection. When this is done, there must be just and satisfactory compensation for the restriction of normal farm practices.

As I move to a close, I would just like these questions, concerns and comments from residents in Nepean–Carleton to be answered during the committee stage. That's all I have to say. Thank you very much.

**The Acting Speaker:** Questions and comments? Further debate? If there is no further debate, are we ready for the question?

Ms. Broten has moved second reading of Bill 43, An Act to protect existing and future sources of drinking water and to make complementary and other amendments to other Acts. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour say "aye."

All those opposed say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 30-minute bell.

The chief government whip has handed me a note: "Pursuant to standing order 28(h), I request that the vote on the motion by Minister Broten for second reading of Bill 43, An Act to protect existing and future sources of drinking water and to make complementary and other amendments to other Acts, be deferred until deferred votes, May 18, 2006."

**Hon. Mr. Caplan:** I move adjournment of the House.

**The Acting Speaker:** The deputy House leader has moved adjournment of the House. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

This House stands adjourned until 10 o'clock tomorrow morning.

*The House adjourned at 1638.*



# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

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Clerk / Greffier: Claude L. DesRosiers

Deputy Clerk / Sous-greffière: Deborah Deller

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Chatham-Kent Essex	Hoy, Pat (L)	Kitchener-Waterloo	Witmer, Elizabeth (PC)
Davenport	Ruprecht, Tony (L)	Lambton-Kent-Middlesex	Van Bommel, Maria (L)
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Nipissing	Smith, Monique M. (L)	Stoney Creek	Mossop, Jennifer F. (L)
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Ottawa-Vanier	<b>Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (L)</b> Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for francophone affairs / ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires, ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones	Toronto-Danforth	Tabuns, Peter (ND)
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Scarborough-Rouge River	Balkissoon, Bas (L)		
Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	Dunlop, Garfield (PC)		
Simcoe-Grey	Wilson, Jim (PC)		
St. Catharines	<b>Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (L)</b> Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, Government House Leader / ministre du Tourisme, ministre délégué aux Affaires des personnes âgées, leader parlementaire du gouvernement		

A list arranged by members' surnames and including all responsibilities of each member appears in the first and last issues of each session and on the first Monday of each month.

Une liste alphabétique des noms des députés, comprenant toutes les responsabilités de chaque député, figure dans les premier et dernier numéros de chaque session et le premier lundi de chaque mois.



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No. 79



Government  
Publications

N° 79

ISSN 1180-2987

**Legislative Assembly  
of Ontario**

Second Session, 38<sup>th</sup> Parliament

**Assemblée législative  
de l'Ontario**

Deuxième session, 38<sup>e</sup> législature

**Official Report  
of Debates  
(Hansard)**

**Thursday 18 May 2006**

**Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)**

**Jeudi 18 mai 2006**

Speaker  
Honourable Michael A. Brown

Clerk  
Claude L. DesRosiers

Président  
L'honorable Michael A. Brown

Greffier  
Claude L. DesRosiers





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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Thursday 18 May 2006

# ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 18 mai 2006

*The House met at 1000.*

*Prayers.*

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

### FARM MUTUAL INSURANCE INDUSTRY

**Mr. John Wilkinson (Perth–Middlesex):** I move that, in the opinion of this House, the government of Ontario should continue to support the increasing solvency and vitality of the farm mutual insurance industry as a key component of the economic and social fabric of rural Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Joseph N. Tascona):** The Chair recognizes the member from Perth–Middlesex.

**Mr. Wilkinson:** It is with pride that I rise to debate the resolution I have placed before the Legislature today. We are here this morning to discuss the farm mutual insurance industry. Many in Ontario would not instantly recognize farm mutuals as the rural bedrock that they are. I hope that my time here today, along with the words of my colleagues, will shed some light on why we should celebrate this important aspect of rural Ontario through my private member's resolution. I'm most grateful that my caucus-mates the members for Huron–Bruce, Peterborough and Hastings–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington have all agreed to join this debate this morning in support of my resolution.

Today I will speak to a number of different facets of the farm mutual insurance industry. I will touch on the history of Ontario's farm mutuals, as well as the characteristics that make them uniquely self-sustaining. My colleagues will highlight their importance to both the economic and social fabric of rural Ontario, as well as their many notable achievements.

First I'd like to share with the House a letter I received from my constituents Brian and Wendy Anderson. They are dairy farmers near Stratford in the former South Easthope township.

"Just as we finished milking at 6:30 a.m. on Saturday, August 23, 2003, fire broke out in our three-year-old dairy barn. We lost the entire tie-stall barn, the roof from our milking parlour and about 30 purebred Holstein cows. Even as the flames were still consuming the rubble, we received warnings to watch out for the insurance people—dealing with them would only add to our difficulties!

"We need not have worried. Our family has dealt with South Easthope Mutual Insurance Co. for generations for both business and personal insurance. Having just expanded our business, we were well insured for both loss and business interruption.

"The fire department was still working when the first of the company directors arrived to offer their support. By the end of the morning, about half of the directors had been to see us. On Monday morning, our agent brought the general manager of the company to meet us and to assure us that their goal was to get Athlone Farms up and running again as soon as possible. One of the directors, also an adjuster, was assigned to our claim and we worked closely with Murray throughout the planning process for our new barn. All of our plans were approved with very little discussion—the company replaced everything that we had lost and we assumed the cost of any extras that we needed for the new facility. During the eight months that it took for our cows to come home, we met monthly with our claim supervisor to go over our expenses for maintaining the herd and the invoices for the construction project. We were able to keep all of our accounts current due to the efficient release of funds from the insurance company.

"At the time, our claim of well over \$1 million was the largest on record for South Easthope Mutual Insurance Co. and we hope that is still the case! It was a very difficult time in our lives and an experience that we would not want to wish on anyone. Dealing with our local insurance company, with people who understand agriculture and farmers' needs, made that part of the rebuilding as pain-free as possible. If only South Easthope Mutual controlled the weather, the construction would have gone much faster!"

That letter says it all.

I am lucky to have a number of mutuals serving Perth–Middlesex. Middlesex Mutual, based in Ilderton, was formed in 1998 when two local mutuals merged to better serve Middlesex residents: McGillivray Mutual, formed in 1876, and London Township Mutual, formed in 1882. Middlesex Mutual has served my communities for more than 246 combined years of service. Tradition Mutual of Sebringville was founded by a merger in 2003. Blanshard Mutual and Downie Mutual combined their more than 100 years of service in 2003. Tradition Mutual serves 6,500 policyholders in Perth–Middlesex, writing \$10.5 million in premiums and holding more than \$20 million in assets. South Easthope Mutual, based just outside my riding's boundaries in Tavistock, serves citizens in Perth–Middlesex, like the Andersons. Founded in 1871,



South Easthope Mutual was founded by local farmers and businessmen in need of affordable fire insurance for their community. These are just three of the 45 farm mutuals across Ontario.

Ontario's farm mutuals were fostered out of co-operation and community goodwill. Communities came together in the face of a mutual threat: fire. The prospect of fire is devastating for a farmer as it can ruin not only their business but also their home. This was a significant concern in the 1800s, when families often cooked, ate and slept all in one room. Lightning was a hazard, and without modern fire prevention technology it was invariably disastrous. In the 1800s it was nearly impossible to get insurance if you were a farmer. The insurance companies were based in England, with offices in Quebec. Service was impractical and insurance was not affordable.

It was under this threat that communities banded together to form mutuals. In the spirit of co-operation and mutual dependence, citizens established non-profit insurance companies that they themselves owned. That is the key: If you're a farm mutual policyholder, you're an owner. Everyone has a vote, and the board of directors is elected by policyholders.

Farm mutuals were extremely popular because they reflected their communities. They were staffed, operated and directed by farmers themselves. Because the farmers involved knew each other personally, they were able to underwrite easily. Community benefit was the motive, not profit.

Rural Ontario worked hard to make sure that farm mutuals had the foundations for longevity. Farmers petitioned governments to pass legislation to establish farm mutuals, and in 1836, 170 years ago, their wish came true. Legislation enshrined the principles of mutual insurance protection. This act allowed the formation of one mutual fire insurance company in each district—the beginning of farm mutuals in Ontario.

Farm mutuals have been among Ontario's most successful businesses. The oldest remaining mutual in Ontario is Dumfries Mutual Insurance Co. Dumfries Mutual was founded in 1856, 150 years ago, in the village of Roseville, and serves 7,500 policyholders in the Cambridge, Guelph and Hamilton areas today.

By the late 1880s, more than 70 mutual insurance companies were offering services in rural Ontario. This led to the founding of the first industry association, the Mutual Fire Underwriters' Association of Ontario, to promote the interests of mutuals and to help coordinate the industry. Now known as the Ontario Mutual Insurance Association, they continue to represent the interests of mutuals at Queen's Park and in the communities they serve.

**1010**

Since that time, mutual insurance has grown enormously, evolving into a modern industry, yet still embodying the spirit of community, co-operation and trust.

Farm mutuals currently have almost 400,000 policyholders and offer a wide variety of insurance services.

Services today go beyond fire insurance; wind and other damage were added in the 1950s. The 1970s saw mutuals offer liability and auto insurance. Commercial coverage was added in the 1980s.

Farm mutuals have consistently grown with the times, and changes to their mandate are necessary to ensure that the industry can adequately serve their communities well into the future.

The 2006 budget announced our intention to amend the Insurance Act and to make changes to the Corporations Act by updating investment rules and corporate governance provisions for Ontario-incorporated insurers, which include farm mutuals. Minister Duncan is responding to the request from farm mutuals for greater flexibility for investment rules, consistent with those that apply to federally incorporated companies. Most Ontario insurers are now federally incorporated and therefore governed by federal rules of investments, which provide for a prudent portfolio approach, giving companies flexibility in their investments and supporting strong corporate governance. The prudent portfolio approach to effective regulation is based on the appropriateness of the entire investment and loan portfolio to the insurer and the management of conflict of interest in investment decisions.

I can tell you that our government is proposing to follow generally the approach taken in the federal act, with some modifications that would take into account the smaller size of Ontario insurers, as other provinces have done.

Smart, effective regulation of Ontario-incorporated insurers ultimately strengthens the security of insurance benefits for policyholders while keeping costs down by allowing insurers appropriate flexibility to manage their business affairs.

Farm mutuals have evolved and will continue to evolve. That's why I seek the support of this House regarding my resolution today. The farm mutual insurance industry has been owned and operated by policyholders on a non-profit basis for some 170 years. Mutuals continue to employ countless residents in rural Ontario who provide non-profit, community-based service. The mutuals remain intimately involved in their communities as sponsors and volunteers for local events, charities and service organizations. Farm mutuals are a made-in-Ontario success story. That's why expanding the services they provide, as well as the support of this House today, will go a long way to ensure that farm mutuals remain central to their communities for years to come. I support the farm mutual insurance industry and believe that it is why I ask all of my colleagues to support this resolution.

I want to thank you, Mr. Speaker, for allowing me to speak on a subject that's dear to my own heart and to those of the residents of my riding of Perth-Middlesex. They have a tremendous impact on all of rural Ontario. I look forward to the comments of my colleagues on this resolution. I want to say to the Anderson family, thank you so much for sharing your own personal story with all of our colleagues today. It gives us the best proof that we



could ask for as to why we need to support this resolution.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr. John Yakabuski (Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke):** It's a pleasure to join my friend from Perth–Middlesex this morning, or to join others in supporting the resolution of the member from Perth–Middlesex with regard to his support for the farm mutual insurance industry in the province of Ontario. It certainly is something that I can wholeheartedly stand in support of. Mr. Wilkinson has gone through the history and the chronology of farm mutuals here in the province of Ontario, so it's not necessary that we go through all of that again, but I certainly agree on the benefits it has accorded people in rural Ontario and rural communities.

When it comes right down to it—and I do support the member. Sometimes we disagree on different things, but we certainly do recognize jointly and severally the importance of rural Ontario here in this House and how much we must fight in order to ensure that rural Ontario, not only the farm mutual insurance industry in rural Ontario but rural Ontario itself, remains viable.

I certainly appreciate the hospitality that has been shown to me through the farm mutuals, attending their conferences and breakfasts. I want to thank Gord Huckabone again for taking me to those events and getting an insight into just how important a service they do provide to farmers and rural people in this province. As Mr. Wilkinson said, there are nearly 400 policy holders in this province—

**Mr. Wilkinson:** Nearly 400,000.

**Mr. Yakabuski:** Did I say “400”? I'm sorry. Let me correct that record before we sit down. I appreciate it. Sometimes heckling is actually good, you see? It's 400,000. Let me emphasize that: It's 400,000. A number of them serve people in my riding. There's not actually a brokerage established in my riding, but there are some surrounding: Lanark Mutual Insurance Co. in Perth and the Lennox and Addington in Napanee serve people in my riding with regard to their insurance needs.

The insurance business, as we know, is changing. A lot of things are changing in the landscape of Ontario. I think it is fair to say that some of those bedrock institutions require a certain amount of our support and encouragement to ensure that institutions that have served this province since before Confederation are allowed to continue and prosper in this province.

This is one of those occasions when you may notice that my voice is more soothing in this House than at other times, because it's one of those occasions when, in a completely non-partisan way—and I am not a partisan person, as you know, but I certainly am one who feels it necessary to make significant points at times on behalf of the constituents we serve and on behalf of the people of the province of Ontario. In the nature of government, you don't always agree. It is absolutely necessary and it is our responsibility to disagree. Not only is it our privilege, but we are bound to do that when we feel we must. But in situations like this, it is so obvious and so clear that this

is something that we can support without reservation. I'm pleased that the member from Perth–Middlesex has seen fit to bring this to the attention of the House for us on this day for this particular debate. I certainly hope that I speak for all members of my caucus when I say I'm going to stand here and rise in support of this bill when the vote comes later this morning or early afternoon because this is something I'm looking forward to.

However, there are, of course, other issues that we disagree on. I see that the government, under tremendous pressure from our side, has decided to inject some sanity into the Minister of Health with regard to the tremendous, terrible draconian measures they were about to inflict on farmers' markets and church suppers in this province. I appreciate that the government has made a positive move in that respect, but not without some very heavy pressure on the part of the members of this side, particularly my colleague from Leeds–Grenville, who comes under a great deal of criticism on this side of the House from the members opposite but who carries himself with tremendous comportsment. His work and his fight for rural people never go unnoticed on my part and theirs.

I'm just about out of time here, because there are people who want to speak on this side as well. But I do want to say “congratulations” to the member for Perth–Middlesex. Well done. We'll be there at 12 o'clock.

**Mrs. Carol Mitchell (Huron–Bruce):** I'm very pleased to rise today to not only speak to this motion but to support this motion brought forward by the good member from Perth–Middlesex. Farm mutual insurance companies provide a vital service in the riding that I have the honour and privilege to represent. They are part of the economic diversity and prosperity of rural Ontario. There are 45 farm mutual insurance companies across Ontario, and seven are located in the riding of Huron–Bruce. I want to take this opportunity to speak about all seven that are located in the riding.

The first is Trillium Mutual, which is located in Formosa and Elma. It's the second-largest farm mutual in Ontario. Formosa Mutual and Elma Mutual combined in 2004, and together they have over 200 years of service.

**1020**

Howick Mutual, which is located in Wroxeter, was founded in 1883 as a result of a public meeting that was held in the home of a local resident. The first annual report was written in 1873, and it indicated that \$114.72 in premiums had been written and no claims were incurred. They offered scholarships to six local students annually, and they sponsored the Wingham Town Hall Heritage Theatre.

The next, Culross Mutual, is located in Teeswater, and they have total assets in excess of \$2.2 million. They were founded in 1872 and they built their first office building in 1992. That was after starting a fund in 1983.

The next, West Wawanosh, is located in Dungannon. They were founded in 1879, and they write approximately 3,000 farms. They are among the top 10 Ontario mutuals in premiums written.



Lastly, I have McKillop Mutual, which is located in Seaforth. It was founded in 1876, and it serves not only Huron county but Perth as well. There are approximately 500 policyholders. They manage more than \$16 million in assets.

That is the list of seven, and it is a very strong indication of how important the mutuals are to all of rural Ontario.

As you can see, all the mutual insurance companies in my riding clearly demonstrate the commitment and the dedication to rural Ontario, and they have been doing it for well over 100 years. It also demonstrates their continuous support of local organizations, fall fairs, festivals and plowing matches, and that's just to name a few. You can't go to an event in my riding where you don't see the logos. They are so strong in our communities.

All company directors—I believe this is one of the strengths they bring forward—are policyholders, and they're elected by policyholders, which ensures local input. These policyholders live in the communities, so they understand the local issues and concerns. Therefore, their services are customized to their communities.

I, along with the member from Essex, as part of the rural caucus, had the opportunity to work with the Ontario Mutual Insurance Association to strengthen it. As a result, the 2006 provincial budget announced the government's intention to amend the Insurance Act and make changes to the Corporations Act by updating investment rules. This came from a request from farm mutuals for greater flexibility in investment rules. We worked on their behalf—the rural caucus remains strong—because we felt that these companies needed that in order to remain strong.

Another unique service the mutual insurance companies offer is called Mutual Protect. They have joined services with the Ontario Provincial Police, and it's a simple, reliable way to have your valuables permanently linked to your licence plate by engraving your licence plate number on a sticker and placing that on your valuables. That's how they have worked with the OPP to track all our valuables.

As a member representing rural Ontario, I fully support this resolution. Farm mutuals are a vital part of our rural communities, and I know they will be for years to come. I just want to say thank you to the mutuals for inviting me to their annual meeting in Toronto. It once again gives us the opportunity to have further discussions and to ensure that they continue to be a vital part of our communities.

**Ms. Laurie Scott (Haliburton–Victoria–Brock):** It's a pleasure to rise today to speak in favour of the resolution "that, in the opinion of this House, the government of Ontario should continue to support the increasing solvency and vitality of the farm mutual insurance industry," given the fact that with nearly 400,000 policyholders, this industry, owned by rural Ontarians for rural Ontario, is "a key component of the economic and social fabric of rural Ontario," brought forward by my colleague from Perth–Middlesex.

Certainly in my area, in the riding of Haliburton–Victoria–Brock, we have enjoyed the service of Farmers' Mutual since 1895, so it was soon after it was first created in 1856. It was to provide insurance to farmers in Victoria county who couldn't find companies to insure them. The only insurance products offered by them back then were fire and lightning policies to insure farm buildings, chattels and livestock. In the first year of business, they wrote policies for 197 policyholders and collected slightly over \$1,200 in premiums.

Today's Farmers' Mutual in Lindsay is the largest farm mutual insurance company in Ontario, and it offers a complete range of insurance products, including residential, automobile, commercial, farm and watercraft. They employ 75 full-time employees. Last year I was at the grand opening of their new building, a state-of-the-art building, which I encourage everyone to visit. It's just on Angeline Street, towards Highway 7.

**Mr. Jeff Leal (Peterborough):** It's a beautiful building.

**Ms. Scott:** It is a beautiful building, my colleague from Peterborough mentions, and it's located right beside the new Lindsay agricultural fairgrounds that are going to open in the next year. It's a great location and a great tie-in to the community and the services they provide in rural Ontario.

I myself have my insurance with Farmers' Mutual. I try not to use it too much. Occasionally, I do deer hunt with my car, but it's just the nature of the area we live in and the number of deer there—not that we're advertising for that.

They have done a great job. They're wonderful community members. It has been mentioned before that they sponsor and support community team projects. I've been able to go to the big Farmers' Mutual banquet they have each year in Toronto. You just cannot meet a finer group of individuals than you meet at these dinners.

**Mr. Leal:** Salt of the earth.

**Ms. Scott:** They are the salt of the earth. The tie-in to the agricultural community is there. They consider families, communities. They are the epitome of rural Ontario and a great example of what caring about your neighbour is for. That is a lot of their history and why they were formed: strength in unity, neighbour helping neighbour. The mutuals evolved through the decades to be up to date, to offer people the best insurance, the best coverage they could realize.

They're community-owned and owned by policyholders, and that makes a difference. I know that whenever I meet them in the communities, they are always adaptable to what goes on in each community. They're not the cookie-cutter approach. They adjust to what's needed in the communities. In this day and age, when you can have that type of service, it's to be valued. They come to our houses, our farms and take in everyone's situation individually. They are an important aspect of rural Ontario. They're important, with their dedication and their commitment.

I wholly support this resolution brought forward by the member from Perth–Middlesex. Anything we can do



to continue to support the farm mutual insurance industry so they can remain viable is what we in the Legislature should do.

I know that I need to share my time with another colleague who wants to support this bill. Thank you very much.

**Mr. Michael Prue (Beaches–East York):** I am probably going to be the only speaker today who is a city boy, who has lived his whole life in the city. In fact, in my entire life I have never been on a farm. But I am going to live on a farm this year for part of my vacation. I have determined that it is important that I get to understand a farmer's life, waking up in the morning and finding out what this is all about, so I will be spending at least one week on a farm near Creemore, Ontario. I hope to report to all of you how—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Prue:** This is in Ontario, not Quebec. I make sure that when I learn something, I learn it in this province.

I'm going to go there, and I hope to report back to you when the House resumes in September or October what I have learned about life as a farmer, although in one week I don't think I will be one of the world's great experts. But I do think it's important that city people try to understand the farming community, farmers and the very many difficulties they're having.

When I looked at the bill, I thought, "Of course we're going to support it," and of course in the end I'm going to support it. But I wonder why, with all respect, it is here. It's not a bill; it's a resolution.

1030

The resolution says that "the government of Ontario should continue to support the increasing solvency and vitality of the farm mutual insurance industry," given the fact that it has all the policyholders and is "a key component of the economic and social fabric of rural Ontario." It never crossed my mind for even a moment that this policy of supporting the farm mutual insurance industry in Ontario was at risk, that anyone was thinking even for a moment of not supporting an institution that has done so much good for so many in this province. Maybe the mover of the resolution, when he wraps up, can explain why he thinks it's necessary to reiterate that support. Is it somehow under risk? Is somebody trying to do away with it? Are other insurance agencies perhaps trying to become interlopers? Are they trying to move in on this field and take over from the farmers' own self-regulated and self-owned insurance industry? Maybe that's happening and I, as a city boy, just don't understand.

I do understand, though, the whole concept of co-ops, because co-ops are not just those on the farms; co-ops exist in many forms, in terms of factories, banking institutions, farms and farm products right across the width and breadth of the province of Ontario. In fact, I had an opportunity over the last two years to work with the co-op movement because they're trying to re-energize themselves, to give government a better understanding of what they do and perhaps to change legislation relating to co-

ops in Ontario. I was the New Democratic Party representative in that ongoing discussion. There were members from the Conservative party, of course, and Liberals, but I was the New Democrat who was there and I attended most of their meetings. The co-op movement, I'm glad to say, is alive and well. They exist to benefit society as a whole and the greater good of the people who live in this province. They also return all the profits they make back to the shareholders. In some cases, those shareholders are very needy people indeed.

So I support the motion because this is, in part, part of that very co-operative movement that has existed in the province for many, many years. But I have to ask—and I guess this is where the debate might become a little partisan for a moment—what would be the sense of protecting this vital and wonderful industry if there are no farmers left to use it? In the last few years in this Legislature there have been a great many questions asked and very few answers coming about farmers and the farming community in general. I have to tell you that it's been a bit of an eye-opener to me. As I said, as I started out in the preface to my remarks, I've never been on a farm, but many farmers come see me in my role as MPP and talk about the difficulty they are having that continues to exist in this province.

The tobacco farmers came maybe two weeks ago to see me with tears in their eyes. They know that their day is done. They know that the tobacco industry in Ontario is not going to survive. They know that the monies they have spent, the millions of dollars they have put in tobacco harvesting equipment and the flues and the cures and all the things that are on the farms today, probably are all for naught. Society has made the decision that tobacco is going to be phased out. I put my hand up to phase out tobacco because I know that it is a carcinogen. I know that society has changed its attitude towards the smoking of tobacco in public places. I'm hoping that before I die, and I hope that's a long time from now, tobacco will be a thing that used to happen, just like spittoons used to be on the floor for chewing tobacco. You don't see that anymore. I'm hoping you won't see the lighting up of cigarettes anymore as well.

But the tobacco farmers know that, and what they're looking for is not unreasonable. They're looking for fair and just compensation. They're looking for the government to do something for them, to assist them in getting into another line of work and perhaps getting out of farming altogether. As one farmer explained to me, again with tears in his eyes, his land on sandy soil is probably not good for a great range of anything—not vegetable farming or anything. Before that it was forested land, and he suggests that perhaps he should go into the tree business because that might be the only thing that is growable there. I don't know what kind of a market there is for the sale of trees, save and except those that you pot and transplant.

I also have to ask the whole question about the long-standing farmers and the number who appear to be on the brink of bankruptcy. They have come to see me. They



have asked why the government doesn't have a risk management program, exactly like what the member from Perth-Middlesex is talking about today. Farm mutual insurance is a program developed by farmers for farmers. What they are asking is, why hasn't the government developed a plan that mirrors that, which will help farmers to keep themselves and their families firmly in the realm where they have lived, many times for generations?

There are many farm crises out there. We have to ask the question, in support of the farmers who ultimately will use the service of the farm mutual insurance industry: What needs to be done first? The Manitoba government has shown some considerable leadership. They've decided that they will help their grain farmers survive the punishing US subsidies. We haven't done that here in Ontario; we haven't done anything of the sort. In fact, for those who grow corn—and we're talking about all the wonders of ethanol these days—we have no protection in Ontario that we will use home-grown corn in our ethanol. In fact, farmers in their fields full of corn watch the US corn coming in by truckloads across the border to go to the brand new ethanol plants, and they wonder why. It is becoming extremely difficult for them to continue in the face of that giant behemoth to the south, that giant country which subsidizes its farmers and makes it almost impossible for them to compete.

It's not just Manitoba that is doing something; Quebec is doing something. Quebec has a whole farm insurance program, a whole farm subsidy program for its farmers. Alberta has subsidy programs for their farmers. Ontario does not. I've heard what the minister and the Premier have to say about this, and it seems that the focus always goes to blaming the federal government for not doing enough. With the greatest of respect, agriculture is one of only two jurisdictions that are shared under the former British North America Act, which is still extant because it sets out the roles and privileges of the provinces and the roles and privileges of the federal government. There are only two shared jurisdictions. One jurisdiction is agriculture, in which each can do its own thing, both the province and the federal government. They can do it mutually; they can do it apart; they can do it severally; they can do it. The only other one is immigration, and this government and previous governments in this Legislature took a long time getting into the immigration field. It took a very long time before we were doing what we should have done 20, 30 or 50 years ago and certainly what other provinces, most notably Quebec, have done in that field.

We need to understand that we have an obligation to those farmers. We have an obligation to the people who are still on the land, to the dwindling numbers of families who make their living on the land. We in cities, people like me, know where the food comes from. I don't grow my own. I wouldn't know how to grow my own. I know how to go to the supermarket and I know whence that food comes. Whether it be Ontario or elsewhere in Canada or the United States, or Chilean apples, we know that a farmer somewhere has done the right thing.

Farmers have grown the crops and produced the food, and we need to protect them.

But in Ontario we need to protect more than that. Although times are good and there are no problems in importing products from South Africa, Chile, Argentina or Israel—and I can see products from all over the world on the supermarket shelves—we need to know that there is food security and that our farmers are capable of producing adequate food supplies should anything happen to us, to our country or to our province. Should it sometime be difficult for us to gain food access from other countries, we need to know that we can produce our own. We need to make sure as a form of national security. I don't want to overblow this, but it is a form of national security that, in the end, we can produce our own food and we can make sure that our own food is safe and can be consumed by us in times of national emergency.

1040

Farmers need something from this Legislature. Farmers need a long-term commitment in order that they can put the crops in the ground and produce and make us safe. The question has been asked, and some people have talked about why there are lower and lower numbers of families willing to work on the farm. The question is a financial one, quite bluntly. There are not a lot of profits to be made by most farmers today. They stay on the land because it is theirs, because it is their way of life and because they love it. But all too often, their children are reluctant to stay. All too often, the children move away to the cities, to the factories, to the lure of bright jobs, to technology, to whatever people want to do. I don't blame them, because that is what they want to do with their lives.

Increasingly, it has become difficult for farmers to maintain their land. Is it because they're not efficient? I don't think so. Is it because the land is not good? I don't think so either, because we in Ontario have some of the most fertile and wonderful farmland in the entire world. The problem is that we don't do enough in this Legislature for our farmers, we don't do enough to help them, and we certainly have not listened long and hard enough to them.

I've talked about the tobacco farmers. I've talked about the grains and oilseeds farmers who have been here. There was also a dairy farmer who camped out in his car in front of this Legislature for nearly a month. He was fighting, I think, for his livelihood, for himself, for his industry. His name was Stephen Webster, and he lived there for a month. In the end, all that happened to Stephen Webster was that he finally had to give up, and he went home and back to his cows and back to his life. I'm sure he is a very frustrated man, because he came here looking for help and he went home with absolutely nothing.

I believe that the McGuinty government, through this resolution, has to get very serious and implement a risk management program. Grains and oilseeds farmers, dairy heifer producers and tobacco farmers all need farm



mutual insurance, but first they need to be protected against the unfair subsidies of American farmers. They need to be protected by this government because, in the end, if we don't protect them, they will not be the users of the institution we're trying to save today.

**Mr. Leal:** It's a delight for me to have the opportunity to speak to this resolution this morning. We know that farm mutuals provide wonderful service and indeed are part of the framework for rural Ontario. I want to thank the member from Perth-Middlesex this morning for bringing this resolution forward from his riding, one of the great centres in Ontario for hog and dairy production. I know the member is certainly in touch daily with the individuals in the rural community in his riding.

I think one of the reasons this resolution is here this morning is that it really highlights one of the great success stories in Ontario: the work of farm mutuals. If you don't take the time every once in a while to profile some of the success stories in this province—indeed, for people who are tuning in here today, this is an opportunity to hear not only the history of farm mutuals in Ontario, but the success that they have providing insurance for some 400,000 policyholders in the province.

A little bit of history: During a period of time, from 1919 to 1923, under the Premiership of Mr. Drury, the United Farmers of Ontario were in power in this province. During that particular time, one of the key policy initiatives for that government, the United Farmers, was to expand the farm mutuals in the province, actively nurturing that business throughout rural Ontario. At a time when Ontario was still basically a rural province where most of the individuals were living during that period of time, bringing people together through farm mutuals made a great deal of sense.

In my particular area of Ontario we have two farm mutual operations. We have the Farmers' Mutual of Lindsay, Ontario, which was founded in 1895. Today, they have assets in excess of \$152 million and investments of \$101 million. The other one that's in my area is the Hamilton Township Mutual, headquartered in Coburg, Ontario, in the riding of my friend Mr. Rinaldi, the member for Northumberland. One of the active directors for the Hamilton Township Mutual was an individual who had a very distinguished career as a member of the Ontario Legislature: Mr. Howard Sheppard. Many people would know Mr. Sheppard. He was a real advocate for the farm community. Indeed, since his career as an MPP for the riding of Northumberland closed, Mr. Sheppard has devoted a lot of time to the Hamilton Township Mutual board of directors.

One of the great things about farm mutuals is that they're operated by their members themselves. Their directors are elected from their policyholders. There are no stockholders, and any surplus either remains in the company surplus account or may be refunded to the policyholders at the discretion of the policy directors.

Since they're owned and operated by policyholders, the services of farm mutuals are customized for their communities. I think that's a very important point, an

opportunity for people to get the kind of insurance that they need. I know that in the city of Peterborough there are many individuals who have policies through the operation in Lindsay, Ontario, and, indeed, the operation in Coburg.

In 1998, there was the famous ice storm that hit eastern Ontario and through into Quebec. After that ice storm in 1998, the eastern Ontario farm mutuals paid more than \$11 million to their policyholders. I'm told, of all the insurance companies, it was the farm mutuals that reacted the quickest to help out their farmers.

It's indeed a very important resolution here today, and we all need to support it.

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman (Oxford):** I'm pleased to stand in the House today in support of the private member's resolution from the member for Perth-Middlesex, that the government should continue to support the increasing solvency and vitality of the farm mutual insurance. Again, I commend him for bringing forward this resolution. I have the offices of three different farm mutual companies in my riding: the Oxford Mutual, the South Easthope Mutual and the Blenheim Mutual. I say "the offices of three," but we have many more farm mutuals that look after the needs of the farmers in Oxford county, and I want to commend them all for their work.

On June 3, 2003, I had the opportunity to attend the 125th anniversary of the Oxford Mutual Insurance Company. Imagine, they had been around 125 years—128 years now. In the celebration, they had a part of the program where they gave out grants to community organizations who were in need of funding to help build a strong rural community in Oxford county, and we want to thank them for doing that.

**1050**

The other thing I wanted to say—and I'm sure members of the Legislature and members of the public have seen the ad on television where we have a father and son getting into the car because they're going out to get together with their neighbours to set up a farm mutual insurance company. The little boy says to the father as they're driving away, "Dad, does this mean we won't be farmers anymore?" And the father says—and I've paraphrased it a little—"No. This will mean that all the community will help us to remain farmers, because we will work collectively to make that happen." I think that really explains the principle of the farm mutual.

The problem I have with the resolution is the terminology "the government will continue to work for the farm mutual insurance companies." What has been happening since this government was elected—and again, this isn't negative to the resolution before us—is that the people in rural Ontario have been having real concerns as to whether the government really is working with them to build strong rural communities.

I will just quickly go through some of that. In the May 2004 budget, this government removed \$128 million from the agriculture, food and rural affairs budget. That would not indicate to me that they are looking to help build a strong rural community, because the support is



diminishing. As was mentioned by the member from East York, the best way to protect and help the farm mutual companies is to help and protect the farmers in Ontario, who are the policyholders and indeed own the company. Of course, by cutting the budget, that doesn't do that. Incidentally, in that year, that was the largest cut of any ministry in the provincial budget.

Again, in the 2005 budget, the budget of the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs was cut by 23.1%. It's written right in the budget: "We are proud of the fact we were able to find ministries where we could find savings. The Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs will be cut by 23.1%." And here we go again, in the budget of 2006: one more time, no help for rural Ontario. Again I say, if we helped rural Ontario, we would indeed help the farmers.

If you don't believe me, it was written in the *Sudbury Star* on March 27, 2006, right after the budget: "If there was ever a budget that made it more clear where a government's priorities lie, we have yet to see it. This is pandering to the urban majority and virtually ignoring the breadbasket of the province. It is an insult, a slap in the face for small-town Ontario." I think that sums it up. I know the members on the government side would suggest that that isn't what happened, but that indeed is the view of the people in Sudbury who wrote that article in the paper, that this government was not standing up for rural Ontario but was letting it go by the wayside.

Very quickly, I just want to mention—and I have spoken to the minister about this before. As we look at the infrastructure in rural Ontario, we presently have a real problem with the viability of the farm co-ops, which are having great difficulty because of insurance and pension liabilities that were created through the sale of one of the largest co-ops in the province, and now all the smaller ones are being held liable for that. In fact this spring, many of them are having trouble paying for their inputs, and they can't get inputs unless they come up with the money first. I'm hoping the minister will be looking at that and keeping one of those rural entities alive and flourishing in rural Ontario.

**Hon. Leona Dombrowsky (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs):** I'm delighted to have an opportunity to speak to the private member's bill that has been introduced by the member for Perth—Middlesex, who himself is a great advocate for his constituents and particularly for rural Ontario and farmers.

I have to say that before I address my remarks to the resolution on the floor, it's important that I correct the record. It's really quite surprising that members of the opposition and the third party don't understand the budget, particularly that the former minister wouldn't realize that our government in fact increased the budget at the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. Given the very serious circumstances that farmers have found themselves in over the course of the last year, we committed \$125 million in extraordinary support; new money that was not in my budget. We committed 125 million new dollars, we increased the budget at the

Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, and both the opposition and the third party voted against that. So I think it's very clear in this Legislature who is really working for farmers.

I do want to talk about farm mutuals and how important they are in rural Ontario, in the many communities that benefit from the services they provide. The resolution before us speaks to the fact that we would support increasing solvency and vitality of farm mutuals. I think it's important that we understand that when farm mutuals increase their solvency and vitality, that's returned to the community; that's returned to farmers. This is an industry that is owned and operated by farmers—100% Canadian. It commits their surpluses to a fund. This fund guarantees that, should a farm mutual become insolvent, 100% of the claims in that farm mutual will be covered by this fund. They're looking out for each other.

I want to talk a bit about an individual from my riding who was very key to introducing this provision. A driving force behind the guarantee fund was Bruce Caughey, who is a dairy farmer from Amherst Island. For more than half a century, Mr. Caughey was a director of the Amherst Island Mutual Fire Insurance Co. I just want to explain a little bit about what that kind of commitment would mean. Mr. Caughey lived on Amherst Island. Amherst Island is serviced by a ferry. Ferry service stopped at 6 o'clock at night. So when Mr. Caughey was out working on behalf of his community, for the good of farm mutuals and their costumers, his road closed at 6 o'clock and it meant that he had to go home either on the ice or he had to arrange his own boat transportation back and forth after hours. That demonstrates the commitment of these early folks who were involved in farm mutuals.

The member from Oxford talked about the commercial that runs on television. I have to tell you, the nature of that individual is very much in keeping with the people who I know in my riding are connected with farm mutuals.

According to *Farm and Country* magazine, not only did Mr. Caughey receive little remuneration for countless hours of community service; he did it on days when he had to deal with this challenge of transportation. But he was rewarded in a manner of speaking in that he was inducted into the Ontario Agricultural Hall of Fame in 1999.

There are other good folks in my riding who work so very hard on behalf of the people who are part of the farm mutual industry. Rick Walters from Napanee is always very good to ensure that I get my invitation every year to their annual luncheon. He wants me to sit down and break bread with them and understand the circumstances of their industry every year. I see Rick in our community. As was already indicated, they provide much support within our community. Also, Don Martin from Tweed, a good friend of mine: His family hosted the Hastings county plowing match last year. These are people who reflect what it is that we do in rural Ontario, and that is, contribute and work hard for our neighbours, for the benefit of our community. I can't think of any better group than farm mutuals to demonstrate this ethic.



**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Perth-Middlesex has two minutes to respond.

**Mr. Wilkinson:** I'd like to draw the attention of my colleagues to the members' gallery. I want to welcome five representatives of the farm mutual industry who have joined us here this morning: Joe Facey, Joan Schmidt, Bill Horvath, Don Brubacher and Lawrence Diamond. Here they are right here. I'd like to say, welcome to urban Ontario and gridlock.

I want to commend my colleagues for speaking in support of the resolution today: the members for Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke, Huron-Bruce, Haliburton-Victoria-Brock, Beaches-East York, Peterborough, Oxford, and of course our own minister of rural affairs, the member for Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington.

I also would like to close by thanking my legislative intern, Mark Peverini, who I know has been with the member from Timmins-James Bay for half of his term, and now he is with me. The member from Timmins and I both agree that Mark is a wonderful intern. He had a lot to do with preparing the remarks today for all members, and I want to thank Mark.

I want to close by having members recall what it is that Brian and Wendy Anderson told me in the letter that I shared with the House. What they were able to do was to clearly state how very, very important it is that there is a farm mutual industry in this province. It is a wonderful part of our economic and social life in rural Ontario, but when times are tough, when there's a fire, it's your neighbours coming to help you. Despite the massive amount of damage and the wonderful experience they had, as someone who comes from the insurance industry—insurance does not take away the pain, but it takes away the insult. That is what the farm mutuals do right across rural Ontario at their core: neighbours looking after neighbours and sharing a risk. I would ask all of the members to support my resolution at noon today.

1100

#### HEALTH PREMIUMS

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod (Nepean-Carleton):** I'd like to move the following: That, in the opinion of this House, the government of Ontario should immediately eliminate the illegitimate health tax, beginning with serving military personnel and senior citizens.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Joseph N. Tascona):** The member has moved ballot item number 38. The Chair recognizes the member.

**Ms. MacLeod:** It's my pleasure today to introduce and debate my first private member's resolution. I hope to receive cross-partisan support today, because this is the right thing to do for our seniors and our soldiers. This is a promise I made to my constituents in Nepean-Carleton during the recent by-election. I believe it is motherhood and apple pie.

Today is a sober day of thought for all of us in Canada when we think of our men and women in the armed

forces. Yesterday, Canada lost its first-ever female to a combat battle death. Nichola Goddard was only 26, and my thoughts and prayers are with her family. I want to reflect on her sacrifice and the sacrifices of all our soldiers during this dialogue today.

There are over 30,000 serving military personnel living in Ontario. They are Brian Nelson of Nepean, they are Shawn Hoopey of Ottawa and they are Adele Donaldson of Barrhaven. As someone who has the fortune of sharing a riding with the federal Minister of National Defence, the Honourable Gordon O'Connor—the general, as we sometimes like to call him—I can tell you that the military is in our hearts and minds in Nepean-Carleton, as I am sure it is with every constituency across this province. In Nepean-Carleton, home to many soldiers of the Canadian Armed Forces, I see many soldiers who make daily sacrifices for us. We know they are put in harm's way, especially now, while they serve in Afghanistan to protect us.

That brings me back to my resolution. I don't believe that anybody who protects this country or who built this province should pay the health tax. In a few short weeks I have been able to accumulate thousands of signatures from across Ontario on a petition calling on the government of Ontario to immediately eliminate the province's illegitimate health tax, beginning with seniors and serving military personnel.

There is widespread support from across Ontario for this resolution. I have received encouragement from the Minister of National Defence, the Honourable Gordon O'Connor. I have received support from Senator Michael Forrestall, the Vice-Chair of the Senate standing committee on national defence and security. I've received support from literally thousands of Ontarians, including veterans like retired Captain Bill Donaldson and retired Lieutenant Colonel Graham Baskerville, and I hope to count on the support of my colleagues in this Legislature today.

I know that eliminating the health tax for soldiers has been raised before in this Legislature. The leader of the official opposition, John Tory, does not feel it is appropriate to charge the men and women of the Canadian Armed Forces this health tax, especially since they do not use the health care system in Ontario. I am also proud that John Tory has made the commitment to phase out the health tax for everyone once he becomes Premier. My colleague the member from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke, who has a large military base in his riding of Petawawa, has stood up for our soldiers and has demanded that this health tax be eliminated for them as well. I'm very pleased he will be joining us in this debate today.

Other provinces, such as Alberta and British Columbia, have exempted military personnel from health care levies and taxes because their health care costs are covered by the federal government. I think we ought to do the same in this Legislature. I think it is imprudent to make our military men and women pay more and get nothing, absolutely nothing, in return.



I also think we must protect our seniors who are on fixed incomes. According to the ministry's website, 52% of seniors who file taxes are paying this health tax. I don't have to tell you that many Ontario seniors are living on fixed incomes. For many of these seniors, rising costs such as property taxes eat into their fixed incomes.

A report from the Ontario Health Quality Council says that low-income people are the ones not getting health care, yet they are paying a greater percentage of their income toward the health tax. This scares me. It means that seniors who are on a fixed income and coping with increased costs—higher fuel costs, mounting property tax increases and delisted medical services—are arguably paying a greater percentage of their income to this tax.

To add insult to injury, the Ontario home property tax relief for seniors, which ensured that every eligible senior homeowner or renter would receive an average property tax rebate of \$475—for up to one million senior households—was rolled back by the McGuinty government when it assumed office. Now Ontario seniors have been twice bitten—once by a rollback of \$475 and now with this new tax, taking at least \$450 out of their fixed income.

I think we ought to do something about this. We must respect those people who have built this province. Thousands across this province agree. Vera Collier from Nepean, a woman who has worked tirelessly for seniors in my community, has added her voice to call for the elimination of this tax for seniors on fixed incomes; so have Helen Byers and Shirley Mahoney, both volunteers with Nepean Seniors' Home Support. They agree that approximately 1.6 million people over the age of 65 who are paying this tax should see some relief.

If this resolution is successful, we could be responsible, together, for giving close to \$390 million, in my humble estimation, back to Ontario's seniors and soldiers. This, of course, is a little more than the \$200 million of health tax funds allocated to the Ministry of the Environment, not to our hospitals, in 2004, and substantially less than the \$3 billion in unbudgeted revenue in the 2006 budget. Our seniors and soldiers deserve this relief.

I will expect today normal pushback from opponents of my philosophy. They will ask what I am going to cut. They will say, "This is a tax that applies to every citizen equally," and they will use an example, I'm sure, of a wealthy senior—one of the few—to try to make their point for this tax grab. My response to all of the above will be that according to the recent Liberal budget there was \$3 billion in unbudgeted revenue that could have helped us give back to our seniors and soldiers, those people who have built Ontario and who protect Canada. I will say, on the point of equity, I think it is unfair, unjust and inequitable that those in the military must pay this tax yet they receive nothing for it because their health care is provided for by the federal government. I will say too that most seniors I know live on modest means, especially as they grow older. With fixed incomes and increasing taxes, fees and costs, the extra costs of delisted health care services and this health care tax, it's making it more difficult for seniors to make ends meet.

Before I conclude, I'd like to touch briefly on the health tax, and I'm sure my colleague the member from Erie-Lincoln, the PC finance critic, will have more to add when he joins the discussion. But we must remember that this is a tax. Even the finance minister is now referring to it as a tax, or at least he did on Wednesday, April 5, even though we were promised during the 2003 election that there would be no new tax increases. Yet that promise was somehow forgotten, and now this government will have collected a total of \$4.1 billion since the inception of this tax to the end of fiscal 2005-06, and they are forecasting \$2.6 billion in health tax revenue for next year. The chart in the expenditure estimates document reveals that this government plans to collect a staggering 8% more from the health tax in 2006-07 than in the current fiscal year. Let's compare this 8% increase with a few other tax revenues: Income tax revenues are expected to go up by 3%; sales tax revenues are expected to go up by 4%; the employer health tax—yes, that's another health tax—is expected to go up 2.6%; and sales tax revenues, at 4%, are the next-highest increase to this health tax.

According to these numbers, I think we can, with good, clear conscience, do the right thing in this Legislature today and salute our soldiers and our seniors by eliminating this tax for seniors and serving military personnel and putting \$390 million back into their pockets, not into general revenues.

I urge all colleagues today to support this resolution for the good of our seniors and for the good of our soldiers because, as I have said, this is the right thing to do. It is motherhood and apple pie, and it can be done.

I look forward to debate and will be happy to respond to any questions or comments.

1110

**Ms. Monique M. Smith (Nipissing):** I'm pleased to stand today in the House and speak to this resolution brought by the member for Nepean-Carleton.

The resolution reads, "That, in the opinion of this House, the government of Ontario should immediately eliminate the illegitimate health tax, beginning with serving military personnel and senior citizens." This isn't a resolution about our respect for the military. Of course, every member of this House has the utmost respect for our men and women serving the country. I have a military base in my riding, and those constituents of my riding are of the utmost importance to me.

What I want to speak to today is the fact that this member is proposing we phase out the health premium and, in that, we bring back the Mike Harris days. As those of you in the House will remember, when we came into government, we inherited a number of deficits, including an infrastructure deficit, a health care deficit, an education deficit, and of course a whopping \$6.4-billion financial deficit.

I would like to know what the member for Nepean-Carleton and her leader, Mr. John Tory, would like to cut when we cut \$2.4 billion out of health care. Would you like to cut the wait-time strategy where we've had such



success and seen our wait times reduced across the province? Would you like to cut our investment in hospitals?

*Interjection.*

**Ms. Smith:** I know the people in North Bay are looking forward to the groundbreaking on our new North Bay hospital, which we've been waiting for for years and for which, I might add to the member for Erie-Lincoln, we've had a poster in our hospital showing a finishing date of 2005 with former Premier Mike Harris in that photo announcing the hospital. Unfortunately, the former Premier never came up with the money for the hospital. So if you were to cut the two—

**Mr. Tim Hudak (Erie-Lincoln):** You delayed it.

**The Acting Speaker:** Order, please. Member from Erie-Lincoln, the member from Nipissing was very respectful to Ms. MacLeod when she was speaking. Can you pay her the same courtesy?

**Ms. Smith:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would just remind the members opposite that the hospital in North Bay did not go forward under Mike Harris because the money wasn't there. If we're to cut \$2.4 billion out of our health care spending, where will the money come from?

Our family health teams, an initiative our government has introduced, are seeing many more patients having family docs in our various communities. This is an important initiative in North Bay. We have one of the first family health teams in the province. We are seeing more of our residents having a family doctor. These family doctors are able to provide more care to more people, including our seniors. They are able to spend more time with our seniors, and that's incredibly important. If we slash \$2.4 billion out of our health care budget, are we taking away family doctors from our seniors? That's a question I have for the member from Nepean-Carleton.

More nurses in hospitals: We have invested in nursing across this province. We are seeing more full-time nursing in the province than ever before. We're up to almost 60% full-time nursing. This is a huge improvement over where we were. We are showing much more respect. We are investing in our nurses. We don't want to go back to the days of treating the nurses like hula hoop workers, as the Mike Harris government I think referred to them. We don't want to see a slash of \$2.4 billion out of our health care budget in order to treat our nurses badly. We need to invest in nursing across the province. We need to provide quality health care where it's needed across the province.

Home care is another issue where we've seen a record investment of \$1.4 billion. This is direct care for seniors in their homes. During the previous campaign in 2003, while I knocked on doors in my riding, I met with seniors who had recently experienced cuts to their home care that was going to mean they were going to have to move into a long-term-care home. That's not where they wanted to be or where they needed to be. With a little bit of home care they were able to stay at home.

We've reinvested in home care. We are seeing our seniors age in place in more places across the province, and that's what they want. With a cut of \$2.4 billion out

of our health care budget, we would see that slashed and we would see our seniors losing those services that they so dearly need.

We would also see cuts to the funding that we've flowed to mental health in our communities and to our long-term-care homes, which I know are incredibly important to everyone in this House.

**Mr. John Yakabuski (Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke):** You're making that up. Is that parliamentary?

**The Acting Speaker:** I'm glad that the member from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke has joined us, but we want to hear from the member from Nipissing.

**Ms. Smith:** It is amazing that the member from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke can find something to say when he hasn't actually been here to hear what I was talking about. I'm talking about the \$2.4 billion that your party wants to cut—

**Mr. Yakabuski:** You don't have to be here to know what you're going to say.

**The Acting Speaker:** Member from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke, come to order.

**Mr. Yakabuski:** She referred to my absence, sir.

**The Acting Speaker:** Member, one more outburst and that's it.

Member from Nipissing.

**Ms. Smith:** I seem to have hit a nerve this morning, perhaps because they are sensitive to the fact that they are proposing a cut of \$2.4 billion from our health care budget. We all know that health care is the most important issue for Ontarians. People in Ontario want to see quality health care close to home, and that is what our government is providing.

I appreciate the opportunity to speak on this resolution. As I've indicated, I will not be supporting this resolution today.

**Mr. Yakabuski:** I'm glad to join the debate. I hope the member for Nipissing will stay to hear what I have to say, but it's highly unlikely.

This resolution on the part of my recently elected colleague from Nepean-Carleton speaks to an issue which I raised in this House shortly after the disastrous budget this government brought forth, bringing forward the largest tax increase foisted on the people of Ontario in the history of this great province. I remember sending a letter to the Minister of Health, to which I got no good response. I did get a response, thank you very much, but I did not get a good response.

It is an issue that we have raised repeatedly in this House, not only in the context of debate but in the context of questions as well, and not only myself but the Leader of the Opposition, the member for Dufferin-Peel-Wellington-Grey, John Tory, has also raised it in the context of questions. So I commend the member for Nepean-Carleton for bringing this forward in the form of a resolution to this House so that perhaps—unlikely, but perhaps—the members opposite will have the freedom to make a decision on this without being whipped or without being told by the Premier's office that this is the



way it's going to be, that they might actually be able to make a decision based on what is right and fair.

When we talk about our military personnel, they don't get their health care from the provincial government. This government can call it a health care tax, they can call it whatever they want, but it is just another hand in the pockets of the hard-working people of the province of Ontario. Over 25,000 military personnel from Ontario have that dip into their pockets on the part of the McGuinty government.

They don't get their health care from the province of Ontario. The federal government is solely responsible for providing health care to our military personnel. In fact, they don't get an OHIP card. They have a DND card that provides them with health care. This shouldn't surprise people when it comes to this government, but what it amounts to is the old double-dip. They want to get them on the tax, like they're getting everybody in this province, and how much longer they can take that, I don't know. But they want to get them on the tax and then, when the military personnel go and procure medical treatment of any nature, they send the bill to the federal government as well. It's the old double-dipping routine on the part of this government.

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Mind you, when you see some of the appointments they've been making, we can understand how they feel so in tune with the phrase "double-dipping." I think we're going to see a few more in the next couple of weeks, some nice, plum appointments made by this government before we recess for the summer, which is their habit: hoping that as the press sort of takes the focus off the Legislature—you who sit on the government agencies committee will see that there will be a number of plum appointments to the friends of the McGuinty Liberals coming in the next few weeks.

This is an issue of fairness, and the Premier has had it placed straight in front of him. His responses have been absolutely brutal, and then he has passed it on to the Minister of Finance, whose responses have been brutaler yet—or more brutal, in case there's an English teacher in the crowd. I want to make sure I got that correct.

What they said was how much they respect and care about our military personnel. I want to take a moment to say that I'm sure all members of this assembly, indeed all Ontarians—our hearts go out to the family of Captain Goddard, who was our first-ever female casualty of war of our country ever in history, in Afghanistan yesterday, defending democracy in that torn country. Our thoughts and prayers go out to her family and also to our serving military personnel who have lost one of their own.

Again I say, this is a fundamental issue of fairness. The member for Nipissing, babbling on over there about what she says this government is doing or not doing, talking about this party talking about taking money out of health care—that, I categorically state here right now for the people watching on television and for our friends in the gallery, has never been said by this party. What we are going to do through the course of our first term in

office is eliminate this regressive, punitive health tax because we will manage the affairs of this province in a prudent fiscal manner that will make that unnecessary. In fact, if this government had any fiscal bones in its body, they could have balanced this budget without instituting this health tax, but they chose not to for purely political reasons. That is what is truly unfortunate about this government. Everything they're doing has a partisan, political reason behind it. It is not about serving Ontarians; it is not about serving citizens; it is not about being fair to those men and women who are defending our interests and the interests of democracy around the world; it is about the Liberal Party's partisan plan and will to be re-elected at any cost to anybody in this province.

I'll say again that I'm pleased and most thankful that my colleague from Nepean—Carleton has brought forth this motion to ensure that fairness will be on the table for military personnel in our armed forces across this province. The McGuinty government has to show some interest in fiscal responsibility because they can balance the budget in this province without that punitive tax. That is only one, and I'm sure that my good friend from Erie—Lincoln, our finance critic, is going to probably touch on some of the other disgraceful moves this government has made to take more money out of the pockets of working families and seniors across this province.

My time is just about up, but I do want to thank you for this opportunity and assure you that for the rest of the day I'll be on my best behaviour, because the last thing I'd want is to be sent home early on a Thursday.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath (Hamilton East):** It's certainly my pleasure to speak to this resolution put forward by the member for Nepean—Carleton. I wanted to start by saying that absolutely, definitely, New Democrats have been on the record time and time again—and being a New Democrat, that makes me in agreement with that position—opposing the McGuinty Liberal government's regressive health tax that they chose to introduce in the province of Ontario. I'm going to speak about that at some length in a few minutes.

But I also have to state—with quite an ironic lilt to my voice, I guess—that I also oppose the irresponsible actions of the former government in the way they dealt with Ontario's tax system in the first place. They made decisions and chose to cut taxes in a way that has forever reduced Ontario's fiscal capacity. I think everyone would agree that that's the case. Regardless of what party you happen to belong to or what position you happen to take on any particular issue, that party over there, the member for Nepean—Carleton's party, when they were in government, made real decisions that reduced the fiscal capacity of the province of Ontario to meet the needs of the people of Ontario. From my perspective, that was extremely irresponsible and has ended up with disastrous results in this province.

I was sitting on municipal council at the city of Hamilton during that time frame—not quite the entire time frame, but almost the entire time frame—when that party was in government, and I can tell you, today we are



still reeling at the city level with the results of their decisions from a fiscal perspective. It started off with their illusory tax cuts. Ask anybody who lives in a city and get them to tell you that those tax cuts really had any results on the pocketbook; they did the opposite. They might have gotten a couple hundred bucks from the Tories, but when it came to everyday life in their cities, in their communities, they paid through the nose and they're still paying through the nose.

We just have to look at the big mess of the property tax system to see what that group over there did when they were in government. It is a mess, and now they're scrambling, through this bill and a bill from another one of their members, to fix the problems that they messed up in the first place. So it's ironic that we're here talking about this current government's fix, which, again, I oppose—and I will speak about that in a few minutes—but let's face it, it was the Tories who messed up the fiscal issues in the province of Ontario. They reduced the ability of our provincial ministries to meet the needs of Ontario citizens, and that includes the Ministry of Health. I think that's something we all have to acknowledge as an underpinning of this debate, and that means senior citizens and working families and young people and older people; it means everybody. Yes, it's appropriate to debate this issue, and yes, it's appropriate to pay positive respect to our senior citizens and to our serving members of the military. On behalf of the New Democrats, I too want to say that we mourn the loss of the woman killed in action on the front lines, the first Canadian woman to be killed in action in battle. We certainly do mourn her loss and have the greatest of condolences to her family and to her colleagues on the front lines in Afghanistan.

But I have to say that this debate is not about those issues; it's more about the choices that governments make in attempting to meet the needs of the people of Ontario. I have to say that previous governments, in the way they dealt with the choices in front of them, decided on illusory tax cuts that led to property tax increases at the municipal level, which are through the roof as a result of downloading and as a result of a messed-up MPAC system, the municipal property assessment system, which, we know, we've had some stinging criticisms of recently. It included a number of local-level user fee increases that were foisted upon users of various municipal services because municipalities were unable to deal with the provision of service at the local level under the crushing burden of downloading that this previous government, the Tories, decided to foist on municipalities. It put local governments in chaos, and they are still struggling to get through that chaos. Quite generally, they made a mess, and now, through private members' bills here and there, they're trying to pretend that they didn't make a mess or that they have the solutions. Well, they didn't have the solutions when they were in government, and they don't have the solutions now, I would submit to you.

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However, having said that, I actually don't disagree with the fact that the Liberal McGuinty government

made a big mistake when they decided to foist a new tax on the people of Ontario, when they decided that a regressive health tax was the right way to go to raise some of the money that the Tories, the previous government, so recklessly cut out of our ability to meet the needs of Ontarians.

The Tories decided it was the best thing to do, to cut health care, to cut education, to cut social assistance, to cut affordable housing, and to ignore crumbling infrastructure and crumbling transit systems. That was their legacy: at the same time pretending to give people money in their pocket while really increasing all the other taxes and user fees they had to pay.

This government, the one we're dealing with now, decides, after promising—this must have been, if not the first broken promise, certainly the worst in terms of broken promises. It is arguably the most odious of the broken promises of the McGuinty Liberal government. Why do I say that? The McGuinty Liberal government had choices when it came to their decisions about how they were going to redress some of the transgressions of the previous government. They had some real choices. But what did they choose to do? They chose to introduce a regressive health tax. Why do I call it a regressive health tax? Because it quite obviously is, if you do the math and figure out in real dollar terms who's paying what amount on their health tax.

Let me give you an example. A family with two income earners, earning maybe a little over \$36,000, will be paying \$900 annually for their health tax; \$900 on \$36,000. Two income earners with \$50,000 in income are going to pay about \$1,200. You figure, well, you know what? That's kind of going in the right direction. You earn a little more, you pay a little more. But a multi-millionaire in the province of Ontario, an individual making millions of dollars, is not going to pay \$1,200. You thought maybe \$1,500, maybe \$2,000, maybe \$2,500, based on the fact they're making so much money. What is that multi-millionaire going to pay? It's \$900, the same as a family with two incomes that's earning \$36,000 a year. That is a regressive system. It's a system that New Democrats at every stage have said is inappropriate, just wrong-headed and the wrong thing to do.

So yes, the McGuinty Liberals had choices. If they were going to break their promise on taxes, they could have introduced progressive taxation. They could have done all kinds of things to make our tax system in Ontario more progressive, meaning that the people who earn more money pay proportionately more in their taxes to help cover off the costs of the services that are required to keep this a thriving, competitive, healthy and environmentally sustainable province. But no, they chose not to do that. They chose not to raise these revenues that the previous government so callously cut out of the provincial revenue capability. Instead of introducing progressive taxes, they introduced a new regressive health tax that they said they weren't going to do.

What could they have done? They could have made some incremental increases in income taxes for those



who are earning over \$100,000, for example. There are choices they could have made. They could have chosen to do something that would be less harmful to middle-income Ontarians, middle-income people, working families, that they like to talk about now. They could have done something to make sure those hard-working families in Ontario weren't hurt financially by their revenue-raising policies. But no, the McGuinty Liberal government chose very clearly: Bay Street over working families; Bay Street over Main Street.

That's what the government decided to do. The McGuinty Liberals decided they weren't going to look at high income earners in Ontario. In fact, in this last budget, what did they decide to do? They accelerated the capital tax elimination, losing \$3 billion over the time frame of the full implementation of that move. What does that do? Well, that helps the banks. It helps the insurance companies maybe. But it doesn't help working Ontarians. It doesn't help middle-income families who are the ones being disproportionately hit by this McGuinty Liberal health tax. That's the choice they made.

They didn't choose to cut the loopholes, for example. Right now, large corporate sectors have got a lot of loopholes in terms of employer health taxes that are not being paid, but they didn't go after ensuring that employer health taxes are being paid consistently across all employers in Ontario. No, they didn't choose to do that. Instead, they chose to hit moderate-income and low-income families and senior citizens and everybody else with a very regressive tax.

What else did they do? You know what? You could almost fall into some of the arguments the member from Nipissing was raising a little earlier on. She liked to talk about all the things they're accomplishing in the health care sector, but she also made it sound like they had no choices. I've just clearly indicated that they had many choices. Instead, they chose to implement a regressive health tax.

What else did they do? We know they haven't hired all the nurses they said they were going to hire. We know there's still a crisis in hospital care. We know that elderly patients in hospitals, particularly in long-term-care facilities, are having a very poor quality of life because of lack of investment by this government, notwithstanding the regressive health tax they've foisted on the people of Ontario.

We know there have been increased user fees as well as the new tax. We now see optometry, routine eye exams, having a new user fee, no longer covered by OHIP, and physiotherapy, chiropractic, all of those things, no longer covered. We have to pay for those things out of our own pocket, except those who are lucky enough to have a health plan at work, and some people do and that's great. But those fees used to be covered under OHIP. Now you're paying for those out of your own pocket, as well as paying your health tax out of your own pocket.

This doesn't help the ability of Ontarians to receive the kind of health care that they need and that they want.

It doesn't help working families to afford all the other things they are faced with in the province of Ontario when it comes to increased cost of living, when it comes to things like hydro rates, when it comes to things like increasing gas costs, when it comes to all of those regular, daily expenses. Then on top of that, working families are faced with a health tax that penalizes, that proportionately they have to pay more for than the high income earners and wealthy people in Ontario.

The government had many choices when it came to how to deal with the previous government's mess in terms of reducing the fiscal capacity of the province of Ontario. The McGuinty Liberal government chose not only to break a promise on taxes but to implement a regressive health tax that is disproportionately burdening working families and lower-income Ontarians compared to others, when they could have had all kinds of other measures put in place that didn't include a health tax but that did include a fairer taxation system that was much more progressive.

New Democrats stand soundly against the health tax.

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**Mr. Wayne Arthurs (Pickering-Ajax-Uxbridge):**

I'm pleased to spend four or five minutes joining the debate today. I must say that it's an interesting resolution, a tax-cut resolution. I shouldn't be surprised. This really falls back to the Mike Harris and Ernie Eves days, where tax cuts were the solution to all of our problems.

I must say to the member from Nepean-Carleton, it may be the only opportunity during the balance of this mandate to bring forward a private member's bill or resolution. Often, it's an opportunity to bring forward something on behalf of constituents or those interest groups or stakeholders in the province to move an agenda forward. That's a progressive approach, and, unfortunately, although they're trying to recapture the Progressive Conservative moniker through Mr. Tory, this tax-cut resolution is clearly anything but progressive.

It would seem to me that Mike Harris ran as the Tax-fighter in the early 1990s. No one really rose to that particular agenda, so he reframed it and became the defender of the Common Sense Revolution. It was another tax cut agenda. This really is just one further step in that regard.

This particular item has already been certainly discussed, if not debated entirely in this Legislature, over the past little while, but let's just remind ourselves what it was that the former government did with their tax cuts, what they did to health care during that period of time, and what would happen if we removed from the health system at this point in time some \$2.4 billion, since that's what's being asked for: the elimination of the health tax. Let's just remember that there were some 28 hospital closures; that over 5,000 hospital beds were eliminated in just two years during the early Mike Harris days; that there were 8,000 fewer nurses working in Ontario from 1995 to about 1998; and that underserved communities in this province ballooned from some 63 to 142. So we know where that agenda took health care, and we clearly know why it is that we need to invest in health care in this province.



I know that in my neck of the woods, both in my own riding and those constituents who have to get service within the area beyond my riding, they very much appreciate the investment we're currently making, and will need to make, on the operating side of our capital investments in places like Lakeridge Health, the Rouge Valley Health System, the Sam McLaughlin cancer care centre and the newly announced west Durham health team, and in expanded dialysis for those in our communities. To make those investments that my constituents can take advantage of within a reasonable geography, if not within their own riding, requires an investment in health care beyond what this resolution would achieve. This resolution would achieve the elimination of some \$2.4 billion from the health care system.

I want to talk about what we're doing for health care in the province of Ontario with the money that we're raising from the health premium. What is it doing? It's bringing down those wait times; it's bringing down wait times for cataracts, for those seniors in our communities who, more often than not, are the ones getting cataract surgeries.

It's improving health care through the establishment of 150 family health teams. Well ahead of the target for the mandate, 150 have been announced to allow those health teams to get themselves established and begin providing that primary health care to begin filling the void created by that astronomical leap in underserved communities during the Mike Harris days.

We're paying for more nurses in our hospitals, in long-term care and in home care. It's providing the opportunity to guarantee places for newly graduating nurses here in the province of Ontario so that they don't have to look elsewhere. We can guarantee them a future here in Ontario.

It's helping to move health care from hospitals to communities. It's driving a primary care agenda. It's getting care closer to home, it's getting care quicker when it's needed, and it's getting care from physicians and support workers who know the patient, not in an emergency room.

It's providing increases for the first time in more than a decade in mental health, certainly a sorely neglected agenda for so long for those in our community with so much need.

We've added new vaccines, free of charge, for young children. That's a savings to families of some \$600 per child, often from families who are least able to afford those out-of-pocket expenses for those particular needs.

The premium is necessary, quite frankly, because of the actions of the previous government. They not only left us with a fiscal deficit, but they clearly left us with a substantial health deficit. Our choice would not have been to have a health premium in the form of a tax. Having said that, the agenda for health care is more important than the neglect that would have occurred without the health premium.

Mr. Speaker, thank you for the opportunity.

**Mr. Hudak:** I'm pleased to rise and debate the private member's resolution of my colleague, the new member

from Nepean-Carleton, and I congratulate her on bringing this issue forward. I think members who have gotten to know the member from Nepean-Carleton know she's not one to simply dip her toe in the shallow end to test the water but instead is someone willing to dive right into the pool with a thoughtful, well-reasoned, meaningful resolution before the House today, standing up for her constituents in Nepean-Carleton. I encourage members of the governing party to stand up for their constituents and against Dalton McGuinty and support this resolution here today.

I'd say, as a priority, I commend the member from Nepean-Carleton, who, today, on the very day Canadian soldiers, men and women over in Afghanistan, fighting for Canadian values of freedom and liberty, bringing those values to the country of Afghanistan—my colleagues have mentioned the tragic passing of Captain Goddard just yesterday. The notion that those soldiers, those women and men overseas, have to pay this Dalton McGuinty health tax when they don't benefit from the Ontario health care system directly is an affront to those courageous women and men. I commend my colleague for saying that the first act should be to take the health tax off the backs of our soldiers here in the province of Ontario.

Secondly—the member is exactly right—seniors, those who built our province and made it strong, who constructed our highways, who built hospitals like the Port Colborne general hospital, Douglas Memorial and West Lincoln Memorial Hospital, to name but three, now into retirement on fixed incomes, looking forward to enjoying their retirement, who for five, six, seven, sometimes eight decades have paid taxes into our health care system, now get whacked with a massive tax hike courtesy of Dalton McGuinty, despite solemn campaign promises to the contrary.

Think of seniors today in the province of Ontario, those in Glanbrook, those living in upper Stoney Creek or Beamsville. Every time they turn around their costs are going up: new user fees brought in by Dalton McGuinty's Liberals, higher home heating costs, higher gas prices, steadily in the high 90 cents to over a dollar, and, despite promises to the contrary, Dalton McGuinty hiked taxes on our seniors and he hiked hydro rates by some 55%.

It is hard to imagine how Dalton McGuinty can sleep at night when he looked into that camera and said solemnly to seniors, looked them in the eye when he was campaigning and told them he would not raise their taxes, he would not raise their hydro bills, and then his first acts in this Legislature were to do just the opposite and break those promises.

The other thing I'd say to my colleagues is that this notion that this health tax goes into the things my colleague from Pickering-Ajax-Uxbridge listed is nothing but one big pile—and I'm conscious of the young students here today, Mr. Speaker—of horse feathers. It's nonsense. This goes into that big revenue pool collecting over at the Ministry of Finance. Those taxes you pay if



you purchase tobacco, if you lose some money at the blackjack table down at Casino Niagara, the sales tax you pay when you buy clothing: It all goes into the same place as the health tax, and that's the giant pile growing at the treasury under Dalton McGuinty. It doesn't go into health care. Not one dime of this goes directly to health care. This is nothing but a massive income tax on the backs of working families and seniors as part of a gluttonous and greedy attack by Dalton McGuinty on your pocketbooks.

Do you know how much revenue Dalton McGuinty has taken out of your pockets if you're a working family in Ontario, a senior citizen or a small business trying to get by? He has taken \$17 billion. It's the biggest tax hike in the history of the province when people can barely make ends meet—\$17 billion.

Let me tell you this: This notion that the Ontario Liberal Party is some big defender of health care is nothing but more horse feathers.

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I remember them campaigning, saying they were against public-private partnerships: "No way; that is the privatization of health care." My friend from Ottawa-Orléans said that during the campaign. But instead, they have increased the number of public-private partnerships and increased the number of privately financed hospitals in this province more than we dared. It would probably make Nelson Rockefeller blush, these 3P hospitals across the province—not that I disagree with the philosophy, but I wish you had told the truth during the campaign and said you were bringing in those 3P hospitals.

At the same time that they raised taxes in a gluttonous attack on pocketbooks, they delisted chiropractic care, they delisted physiotherapy and they delisted optician services in the province, effectively creating two-tier health care for the people who need these services. To this day, despite the \$17-billion increase in revenue, they still make patients of those services pay out of their own pocketbooks.

We have an unsatisfactory announcement by the province for the West Lincoln Memorial Hospital. There's a great staff there; great patient service. People in Grimsby, Smithville and Beamsville all depend on this hospital. But the announcement that it won't be until 2009 at best that this government plans on breaking ground with a very unsatisfactory level of provincial funding is a shame. I suspect that this is just one more promise by Dalton McGuinty to try to sneak through the next election, which he plans on breaking if he is successful. I certainly hope that is not the case.

Then health card clinics, which we benefited from in Beamsville, Fort Erie, Port Colborne and Dunnville for years, so seniors wouldn't have to drive to St. Catharines, so mothers and fathers taking care of their children, trying to run them around to sports and school—now they can no longer get their health cards renewed at the Beamsville seniors' centre because they're cutting out health card clinics. They probably don't cost that much:

The space is provided voluntarily, for example, in Beamsville by the seniors' centre.

I want to bring to the attention of the members of the Legislative Assembly the cut in the TBT procedure, an important women's health issue, to attack stress urinary incontinence, increasingly affecting women as they get older. It has now been substantially reduced at our local hospital, despite Dalton McGuinty's promises to the contrary.

I'd say, in conclusion: Congratulations to my colleague. This is a sensible, well-thought-out and important resolution reflecting what I think all of us hear from our constituents on a regular basis. This is not connected to health care; it is nothing but a massive tax increase on the backs of seniors and working families. They should reduce it, beginning with those in the military and our hard-working senior citizens.

**Mr. Phil McNeely (Ottawa-Orléans):** I'm pleased to speak to ballot item number 38, the elimination of the health tax for military personnel and seniors. It's quite coincidental that today we're mourning the death of Nichola Goddard, who made the supreme sacrifice: She gave up her life for Canada.

I'd like to thank the member from Nepean-Carleton for bringing this motion forward, but I wonder how the member can do that—suggest that the health premium be slashed—when our government has spent its mandate cleaning up the mess that the Tories left across Ontario and particularly in the Ottawa area.

Under the Harris and Baird government, the Ottawa area suffered immensely from the cuts to health care. The Tories closed two hospitals, Riverside and Grace, and they tried to close the Montfort, except they lost the court case. Thank goodness for Gisèle Lalonde; they won the court case. Our community hospital in Orléans is not only there—the Montfort is doing well—but it's going to be doubled in size, and includes a whole wing for the military. That was the legacy left by the Tories in Ottawa, people who were supposed to be supporting us.

We had the 14<sup>th</sup>-longest wait times out of 14 in the province. That's according to the report from Access to Health Services in Ontario, April 2005, the ICES report. We were the worst-served in the province of Ontario. All you could get out of the member from Nepean-Carleton or the member from Lanark-whatever was, "Well, it's because of Quebec." Minister Smitherman has changed that. Minister Smitherman has put money into Ottawa. We have increased the capacity and we've increased MRI exams by 43% in two and a half short years and we're continuing to provide the health care that we in Ottawa deserve and that the member for Nepean-Carleton wants to follow her predecessors and destroy.

The honourable member suggests eliminating the health tax for senior citizens. As a senior citizen, I need that, and as a high-earning senior citizen I'm pleased to pay the health tax. It's important. I'm going to need those services and my family is going to need those services. Seniors come to me and tell me they want better health



care services. They don't want to save those dollars. They want to make sure the health care services are there.

What about our military personnel? I think this is a different situation. I support that part about the military. It is a situation where the federal government is paying. But when you were down in my riding on Tuesday instead of being in this House, members for Nepean-Carleton and Erie-Lincoln, you should have talked to Royal Galipeau, the federal member. We should get those transfer payments. There's a major gap, and we can't afford the health care in Ontario that they can afford in other provinces across the country because we support every province, other than Alberta and maybe British Columbia, through the inequity, that gap that we talk about. When you're down in my riding next time, talk to Royal Galipeau, who hosted your meeting, and make sure—

**The Acting Speaker:** Thank you. Time for a response.

**Ms. MacLeod:** I really appreciate the members from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke, Hamilton East, Pickering-Ajax-Uxbridge, Erie-Lincoln and Ottawa-Orléans. This is my first foray into private members' business. It is something that is very important to my constituents. I have a lot of seniors and military personnel who expect this premium, this illegitimate tax, this broken promise, to be cut. I find it highly ironic that the member from Ottawa-Orléans, whose riding is affectionately called CFB-Orléans, with the amount of military personnel there, would speak against this resolution. I have—right in front of me, in fact—petitions, signed, from his riding when I attended his riding.

I've got a letter from Cornwall that says, "I've written and spoken to my MPP Jim Brownell on a number of occasions about this"—

#### *Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker:** Member from Huron-Bruce, we're close to being finished. Can you please be quiet?

**Ms. MacLeod:** I have petitions from the army, navy and air force veterans' unit in Stratford. These are not Conservative ridings; they're Liberal ridings. The people of Ontario don't want to pay this tax, because it's not going to health care. They don't want to pay this tax as seniors or serving military personnel. I find it highly offensive that they don't support our military, but I do and my colleagues do and the Conservative Party of Canada does. Thankfully, last night they continued to support our mission in Afghanistan.

I urge my colleagues to do the right thing, something that should have been motherhood and apple pie earlier today. But you're going to sit down. You're going to vote against it because you don't know how to do the right thing. You'll just break another promise. You've lost your moral compass. I'm just shocked and appalled. I'm upset. The people in Nepean-Carleton will be disappointed today if this does not pass.

**The Acting Speaker:** The time for private members' public business has now ended.

### FARM MUTUAL INSURANCE INDUSTRY

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Joseph N. Tascona):** We'll deal with ballot item number 37, which is a resolution by the member from Perth-Middlesex, Mr. Wilkinson. It reads:

"That, in the opinion of this House, the government of Ontario should continue to support the increasing solvency and vitality of the farm mutual insurance industry as a key component of the economic and social fabric of rural Ontario."

Is it the pleasure of the House that this motion carry?

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those opposed, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

We'll defer the vote for a few moments. Now we'll deal with ballot item number 38.

### HEALTH PREMIUMS

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Joseph N. Tascona):** Ms. MacLeod has put forth a resolution:

"That, in the opinion of this House, the government of Ontario should immediately eliminate the illegitimate health tax, beginning with serving military personnel and senior citizens." Is it the pleasure of the House that this motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

We'll call in the members. There will be a five-minute bell, and we will deal with both ballot item numbers.

*The division bells rang from 1200 to 1205.*

### FARM MUTUAL INSURANCE INDUSTRY

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Joseph N. Tascona):** Mr. Wilkinson has moved ballot item number 37. All those in favour, please rise and remain standing.

#### **Ayes**

Arthurs, Wayne	Hudak, Tim	Qaadri, Shafiq
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Jackson, Cameron	Runciman, Robert W.
Brownell, Jim	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Ruprecht, Tony
Chudleigh, Ted	Leal, Jeff	Scott, Laurie
Delaney, Bob	Levac, Dave	Smith, Monique
Dhillon, Vic	MacLeod, Lisa	Smitherman, George
Di Cocco, Caroline	McNeely, Phil	Wilkinson, John
Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Miller, Norm	Wilson, Jim
Fonseca, Peter	Mitchell, Carol	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Hardeman, Ernie	Ouellette, Jerry J.	Yakabuski, John
Horwath, Andrea	Patten, Richard	
Hoy, Pat	Prue, Michael	

**The Acting Speaker:** All those opposed, please rise and remain standing.

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Claude L. DesRosiers):** The ayes are 34; the nays are zero.

**The Acting Speaker:** I declare that the resolution by Mr. Wilkinson, ballot item number 37, has passed.

The doors will now be open for 30 seconds.



## HEALTH PREMIUMS

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Joseph N. Tascona):** Ms. MacLeod has moved ballot item number 38. All those in favour of the resolution, please rise and remain standing.

## Ayes

Chudleigh, Ted  
Hardeman, Ernie  
Hudak, Tim  
Jackson, Cameron

MacLeod, Lisa  
Miller, Norm  
Ouellette, Jerry J.  
Runciman, Robert W.

Scott, Laurie  
Wilson, Jim  
Yakubski, John

**The Acting Speaker:** All those opposed to the resolution, please rise and remain standing.

## Nays

Arthurs, Wayne  
Berardinetti, Lorenzo  
Brownell, Jim  
Delaney, Bob  
Dhillon, Vic  
Di Cocco, Caroline  
Flynn, Kevin Daniel

Fonseca, Peter  
Hoy, Pat  
Lalonde, Jean-Marc  
Leal, Jeff  
Levac, Dave  
McNeely, Phil  
Mitchell, Carol

Patten, Richard  
Qaadri, Shafiq  
Ruprecht, Tony  
Smith, Monique  
Smitherman, George  
Wilkinson, John  
Wynne, Kathleen O.

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Claude L. DesRosiers):** The ayes are 11; the nays are 21.

**The Acting Speaker:** I declare that the resolution is lost.

Private members' public business is now completed. The House will resume at 1:30 p.m. of the clock.

*The House recessed from 1209 to 1330.*

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

## POPULATION COUNTS

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh (Halton):** I rise today to provide my colleagues with notice of a forthcoming proposal so they can consider its merits.

Substantial population growth in Ontario, particularly in the greater Toronto area, has created more than the usual number of headaches for local government. The province of Ontario provides funds to a number of partners based on population counts. Just as a stopped clock is correct twice a day, using census data from Stats Canada means the population counts are correct only twice a decade.

The town of Milton, which I represent, has a current population of 62,000 people, according to municipal planners, but receives provincial funding based on its 2001 population of only 32,000.

Out-of-date population counts are causing a real problem for the people in growth municipalities when it comes to funding for their hospitals, roads, potential gas tax sharings and other projects.

My motion addresses this problem. I will suggest that the government of Ontario immediately move to utilize more accurate population counts. Further, I will suggest that the method already in use to determine if an area is

underserved by physicians be adopted as the model for instances where the province uses population counts to determine funding. That method is to use household counts available through the municipal property tax rolls, which are very current, and apply a multiplier to account for children.

While no method of determining the population is 100% accurate, my proposal is fair, up to date, and simple to understand and use. I invite my colleagues to provide their input on this issue three Thursdays from now.

## MIKE BRIDEAU

**Ms. Monique M. Smith (Nipissing):** I rise today in the House in support of Mike Brideau. He is a resident of the great riding of Nipissing and a finalist in the TSN/Lay's Greatest Canadian Hockey Fan contest.

Mike is a father of two and a devoted community member who spends his entire winter in rinks around our area and around the province, coaching hockey. When he's not coaching, he's watching. But he doesn't just watch hockey; he doesn't just collect hockey paraphernalia. He does. He coaches. He is the consummate fan who is taking his ability and putting it into action. He is coaching his son Zachary's Novice hockey team and his son Michael's Peewee team. He has taught through the Tim Hortons hockey for beginners program for seven years, and this past year he was the head instructor. Not enough to devote a whole, long, northern winter to hockey—he's now coaching ball hockey in the summer.

In his submission to the Hockey Hall of Fame Greatest Canadian Hockey Fan contest, Mike noted, "I always instil fair play in my players and tell them at the beginning of the season that our main goal is to go out and have fun."

If he wins, Mike will receive a trip to Toronto to be honoured at the Hockey Hall of Fame as the first inductee as Canada's greatest hockey fan. I encourage all residents of Nipissing and across Ontario to go to [www.tsn.ca/contests](http://www.tsn.ca/contests) or [www.lays.ca](http://www.lays.ca) before June 2 to vote for Mike Brideau—not only Canada's greatest hockey fan, but one of the province's and North Bay's unsung heroes. Thank you to Mike.

## SAFE DRINKING WATER LEGISLATION

**Ms. Laurie Scott (Haliburton–Victoria–Brock):** We are all committed to ensuring clean drinking water for all Ontarians. Unfortunately, the Clean Water Act is just another McGuinty government broken promise.

The Liberal broken promise water act simply does not deliver. It does not deliver on their promise to implement all of Justice O'Connor's recommendations. It does not deliver on any financial support for municipalities and landowners. It does not deliver on substantive details; the bill lacks clear definitions.

It does not deliver on a proper appeal process. It does not deliver on a consultative approach, instead favouring

punitive, sweeping powers of a permit officer. It does not deliver compensation for expropriated land. It does not deliver a strong, realistic business case.

Justice O'Connor clearly states, in recommendation 78: "The provincial government should ensure that programs relating to the safety of drinking water are adequately funded."

The McGuinty government must have missed that part. You can't responsibly provide \$67.5 million for plan development and then not one red cent to help communities bear the cost of that plan.

The Liberal government's Clean Water Act pits neighbour against neighbour and smaller municipalities against their agricultural communities. They're playing a zero-sum game when we should be working together to create viable, sustainable solutions to protect our drinking water supply. The Clean Water Act is just another broken promise.

#### FRANKIE CHU

**Mr. Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina):** On May 12, school trustee Chris Bolton and I attended a memorial service for an 18-year-old Harbord Collegiate student, Frankie Chu, who died while playing a rugby game, a game he loved. The ceremony was very moving, as student after student and teachers spoke about the way Frankie touched their lives and whose absence they will forever miss.

He was a member of the so-called five musketeers. They were inseparable and there was much love between them. Frankie was in Canada for only four years, yet he made incredible strides socially and academically. I should point out that he benefited greatly from the ESL programs he was taking—a program that is in great demand yet in such short supply.

I congratulate the principal, the teachers, the students, and the Northern Secondary rugby team for showing up and for helping to create a touching memorial and a memorable day for the Chu family.

#### MEGAN'S WALK

**Mr. Phil McNeely (Ottawa-Orléans):** I rise in the House to commend over 100 people who joined me this past Sunday to pay tribute to a brave and inspirational young girl. My wife Anna-Marie, my son James and I participated in a fundraiser put together by Tracy Gusdal in Orleans. Ms. Gusdal was inspired to organize what was called Megan's Walk, in memory of four-year-old Megan Bebenek.

Megan passed away on June 17, 2001, after struggling with brain stem glioma, a rare and often inoperable form of cancer. Megan's mother, Denise Bebenek, organized a five-kilometre walk on Mother's Day back in 2001 around the Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto to help raise money for brain stem glioma research. That first

year, over 900 people participated in the fundraiser, and together they raised over \$90,000 for this worthy cause. Last year over 1,800 people took part in Megan's Walk, raising \$180,000 for cancer research.

When Tracy Gusdal heard Megan's story and found out about Denise Bebenek's caring fundraiser in Toronto, she decided to bring Megan's Walk to Orleans. Ms. Gusdal met with Denise, who wanted to bring the walk to Ottawa but could not be there at the time, as she was organizing the same walk here in Toronto. Tracy decided to take on the task, and as a result held the first walk in Orleans this past Sunday on Mother's Day. The walk was extremely successful, raising nearly \$3,200 for cancer. Twenty-five per cent of the net proceeds will go to the CHEO cancer unit, while the remainder will help fund pediatric brain tumour research.

I was proud to participate in Megan's Walk in Orleans this year and hope to be there every year supporting the struggle to beat cancer.

#### FOOD SAFETY

**Mr. Tim Hudak (Erie-Lincoln):** A couple of verses here to share with my colleagues:

Simple Dalton met a pie man  
Going to the fair;  
Says simple Dalton to the pie man,  
"Let me test your wares."  
Said the pie man to simple Dalton,  
"My pies are good, made fresh today."  
But said the Premier, "Dalton knows best  
And I might just tax you along the way."

No doubt, people across the province of Ontario are thrilled with the notion that Dalton McGuinty is going to hire inspectors to go to farmers' markets across the province in the time ahead. Lord knows we need the help.

Is that pepperoni stick hot, extra hot or just a spicy form of mild? Who doesn't worry that they may be slipping a little too many apples into those apple pies or, heaven forbid, a little boysenberry slipped in there?

We need Dalton McGuinty's inspectors to make sure that that strawberry-rhubarb pie has the right amount of rhubarb and the right amount of strawberries.

Church suppers are under attack as well. This proposal to ensure that all potluck dishes are cooked in a central location kind of defeats the purpose, I think. Perhaps the geniuses in Dalton McGuinty's office are having too much luck with another kind of pot and not the one we're talking about.

Let me say this: Let's resign this idea to the trash heap of bad Dalton McGuinty ideas like the sushi police, the gummi bear inspectors, and that soup and salad tax.



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## WEST SCARBOROUGH NEIGHBOURHOOD COMMUNITY CENTRE

**Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti (Scarborough Southwest):** I'd like to take this opportunity to rise and congratulate the West Scarborough Neighbourhood Community Centre on the occasion of their 50th anniversary. This valuable multi-service neighbourhood centre is located in the riding of Scarborough Southwest but also provides services throughout the former city of Scarborough and east Toronto.

The West Scarborough Neighbourhood Community Centre is a natural outgrowth of the West Scarborough Boys and Girls Club, which was initiated by the Scarborough Civitan Service Club through community action. Originating in 1956, the organization grew to the point where, in 1965, after incorporation, it relocated and assumed all functions at the present location at 313 Pharmacy Avenue. In co-operation with the city of Scarborough and now the city of Toronto, the club has provided programs and services to both boys and girls throughout its history. In 1976, fully integrated co-ed programs and services were implemented.

The primary mission of the West Scarborough Neighbourhood Community Centre is to offer neighbourhood programs and services designed to enhance the well-being of people in the context of their community, culture and environment. The centre has evolved over the years. From very humble and meagre beginnings has sprung an entire complex serving an ever-evolving community. From infants to seniors and everything in between, the West Scarborough Neighbourhood Community Centre has truly become a welcoming place where there is room for everyone, a safe harbour where, in an inclusive environment, people help and people learn to help themselves.

Once again, I'd like to congratulate the West Scarborough Neighbourhood Community Centre on its 50th anniversary.

## SMOKING CESSATION

**Mr. Jim Brownell (Stormont-Dundas-Charlottenburgh):** I rise in the House today to offer my sincerest congratulations to Lynn Marchand from Cornwall, Ontario, the recent grand prize winner of the Ministry of Health Promotion and Canadian Cancer Society's Driven to Quit Challenge. Ms. Marchand won the challenge, the grand prize being a brand new 2006 Honda Civic hybrid, by successfully quitting smoking after more than 20 years. What an accomplishment. I credit my good friend the Honourable Jim Watson and his innovative Ministry of Health Promotion for the contest's success. In Ms. Marchand's words, "The Driven to Quit Challenge was a great motivator for me."

Our government is encouraging Ontarians to quit smoking because we understand the power of preventive health. Tobacco-related diseases cost our health care system at least \$1.7 billion annually. Through the landmark Smoke-Free Ontario campaign, we are tackling our province's number one cause of premature death and disease: smoking. The campaign ranges from public health education and tobacco control to smoking cessation programs, programs that will assist constituents in my riding of Stormont-Dundas-Charlottenburgh and all Ontarians.

Today in this House I am certainly proud to salute Lynn Marchand on her courage and willpower and commitment to lifelong health. She has tackled her smoking problem. She is a model to all Ontarians that it's never too late to quit.

## ROAD SAFETY

**Ms. Jennifer F. Mossop (Stoney Creek):** It takes a split second for your life to be forever altered. It takes just a split second of poor judgment or distraction to take you from that lovely long holiday weekend that you were anticipating to tragedy.

I rise today to highlight the importance of driving safely and responsibly this Victoria Day weekend. So many accidents and deaths happen on long holiday weekends. People need to make the appropriate preparations for their road trips. Their vehicles have to be safe and in good working order. They need to be sober and well rested. The OPP will be out in full force to remind you of that. So beware and be prepared for that.

Public safety is a paramount concern of this government, and that's why we passed Bill 169, the Transportation Statute Law Amendment Act. We want people to know that if a car part detaches from your car, you and the person who installed it are liable. So be aware of that. You have to be safe.

The government also responded to the safety concerns of mothers, fathers and the police by requiring the use of booster seats for children who have outgrown the car seat but aren't quite ready for a regular seat belt. That is because a properly installed car seat does reduce the risk of serious injury or death by as much as 75%.

It only takes a second to kill or maim yourself, a loved one or a stranger. Do not forever alter your life, the life of a loved one or the life of someone else by poor judgment or distraction. Be careful out there. Take care and make sure that everybody else does, too.

## LEGISLATIVE PAGES

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Joseph N. Tascona):** As today is the last day in the House for this group of pages, I know that all the members will want to join me in thanking them for their assistance over the last four weeks.

*Applause.*

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### INCOME TAX AMENDMENT ACT (ONTARIO HOME ELECTRICITY RELIEF), 2006

### LOI DE 2006 MODIFIANT LA LOI DE L'IMPÔT SUR LE REVENU (AIDE AU TITRE DES FACTURES D'ÉLECTRICITÉ RÉSIDENTIELLE DE L'ONTARIO)

Mr. Duncan moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 117, An Act to amend the Income Tax Act to provide for an Ontario home electricity payment / Projet de loi 117, Loi modifiant la Loi de l'impôt sur le revenu pour prévoir un paiement au titre des factures d'électricité résidentielle de l'Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Joseph N. Tascona):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

The Chair recognizes the Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan (Minister of Finance, Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet):** I'm pleased to rise today to introduce this legislation, which will help the most vulnerable in our society: low-income Ontarians who need assistance with their energy costs. Under this program, we are targeting a total of \$100 million to almost 1.5 million low-income families.

## MOTIONS

### PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

**Hon. James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, Government House Leader):** I seek unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding private members' public business.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Joseph N. Tascona):** Is there unanimous consent? Agreed.

**Hon. Mr. Bradley:** I move that, notwithstanding standing order 96(d), the following change be made to the ballot list of private members' public business: Ms. Munro and Ms. Elliott exchange places in order of precedence such that Ms. Munro assumes ballot item 78 and Ms. Elliott assumes ballot item 43, and that, pursuant to standing order 96(g), notice be waived for ballot item 43.

**The Acting Speaker:** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

## COMMITTEE SITTINGS

**Hon. James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, Government House Leader):** I seek unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding a committee time change for the standing committee on general government.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Joseph N. Tascona):** Is there unanimous consent? Agreed.

**Hon. Mr. Bradley:** I move that, in addition to its regularly scheduled meeting times, the standing committee on general government be authorized to meet Monday, May 29, 2006, between 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. for the purpose of clause-by-clause consideration of Bill 53, An Act to revise the City of Toronto Acts, 1997 (Nos. 1 and 2), to amend certain public Acts in relation to municipal powers and to repeal certain private Acts relating to the City of Toronto.

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**The Acting Speaker:** The government House leader has moved that, in addition to its regularly scheduled meeting times, the standing committee on general government be authorized to meet Monday, May 29, 2006, between 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. for the purpose of clause-by-clause consideration of Bill 53, An Act to revise the City of Toronto Acts, 1997 (Nos. 1 and 2), to amend certain public Acts in relation to municipal powers and to repeal certain private Acts relating to the City of Toronto. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

**Hon. Mr. Bradley:** I seek unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding a committee time change for the standing committee on the Legislative Assembly.

**The Acting Speaker:** Is there unanimous consent? Agreed.

**Hon. Mr. Bradley:** I move that, in addition to its regularly scheduled meeting times, the standing committee on the Legislative Assembly be authorized to meet on Thursday, June 1, 2006, and Thursday, June 8, 2006, from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. for the purpose of public hearings and clause-by-clause consideration of Bill 11, An Act to enact the Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves Act, 2005, repeal the Provincial Parks Act and the Wilderness Areas Act and make complementary amendments to other Acts.

**The Acting Speaker:** The government House leader has moved that, in addition to its regularly scheduled meeting times, the standing committee on the Legislative Assembly be authorized to meet on Thursday, June 1, 2006, and Thursday, June 8, 2006, from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. for the purpose of public hearings and clause-by-clause consideration of Bill 11, An Act to enact the Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves Act, 2005, repeal the Provincial Parks Act and the Wilderness Areas Act and make complementary amendments to other Acts. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

## STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

### HEALTH CARE

**Hon. George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** I'm very pleased to rise in this



assembly today to share with all members the latest news about wait times in Ontario.

As you will know, our government has made shorter wait times a priority and, together with health care partners across the province, we're working to achieve this goal. Just months after taking office, we launched a comprehensive wait-times strategy, and our strategy has already shown dramatic results: We've increased the number of procedures and we've helped to reverse trend lines that saw waiting lists getting worse.

A key part of our strategy is our wait-times website, a website which shares up-to-date information on wait times with all Ontarians, broken down by procedure and by local health integration networks, allowing for better decision-making and increased accountability. The website has already shown itself to be a tremendous success, and I'm delighted to report that website hits are closing in on the one million mark, with 950,000 hits as of today. It's being used by patients, families of patients, doctors, nurses and hospital staff, and of course there have been countless visits by researchers in the offices of the official opposition.

The data on the website could not be more clear. It reflects the reality that wait times in Ontario are down across the board across the province. Whatever method you use to measure them, whatever criteria you use to calculate them, wait times are down. Whether you look at average wait times, median times or 90th percentile times, they're all there, they're all available and they're all down.

Of course, it is far too early to declare victory. Our wait-times initiative is ongoing, but these early results are tremendously encouraging and tremendously good news for the people of our province. Our goal is a consistent and ongoing reduction in wait times, first in the five key areas we've identified: Cataract surgery, hip and knee replacements, cardiac bypass surgery, MRI and CT scans, and cancer surgery. Another part of our goal is to identify bottlenecks or problems that may exist and to take quick action to correct them, and we are doing so.

Today, it is a great pleasure for me to advise all members of this assembly that we have updated the wait-times website with the most current data that we've compiled—data for February and March of this year.

Let me quickly run through the numbers for what we call "90% completed within." That's the figure for how long it takes for 90% of people to receive the procedure they need. This 90th percentile figure is much more meaningful than the average or median times, as it takes in 90% of patients. It is also the figure my honourable friend the Leader of the Opposition has been encouraging us to use, calling it more complete information.

I agree with my friend, so let me share these 90th percentile numbers with him and with all members of this assembly. For cancer surgeries in February and March, the "90% completed within" number averaged three days less than our baseline of last August and September. That is a 3.7% drop; angiography, a 41% drop; angioplasty down 25%; bypass surgery down 16%; CT scans also

down, 14.8%; MRIs down 26.7%; hip replacement surgery, a 4.3% drop; and knee replacement surgery, 10.2% better.

Let me also acknowledge that not all results are what we'd hoped for. The province-wide median wait time for CT scans, for example, has remained flat. If we break down the data by LHIN, as the website does, there are examples of wait times actually rising, like MRIs in the Central West LHIN or knee replacements in the Erie-St. Clair LHIN. We're certainly not hiding this. This information is on the website for all to see. In fact, that is one of the key purposes of the website: to help us identify these problem areas in order that we can focus our energy and resources on solving them, which is exactly what we're doing.

In recent weeks I have spoken to hundreds of doctors, nurses, hospital administrators and patients who are passionate supporters of the work we're doing together to reduce wait times. Because of the commitment and hard work of our health care workers, we're seeing remarkably encouraging results. To denigrate the remarkable successes we've seen is to denigrate the men and women who have been responsible for it.

I want this progress to continue. I want to see wait times continue to decline, not because it represents a useful number but because of what these shorter wait times represent for real people: a new lease on life for a cancer patient, new mobility for a senior suffering from hip problems, results from a CT scan to relieve a patient's anxiety, or enhanced vision from a successful cataract surgery. That's what this strategy is all about: real results for Ontarians and their families. That's what we're delivering, and I'm tremendously proud to share this good news with members of this Legislative Assembly and indeed with all Ontarians.

## IMMIGRANTS' SKILLS

### COMPÉTENCES DES IMMIGRANTS

**Hon. Mike Colle (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration):** Earlier today at Sunnybrook hospital, I was proud to announce the latest step in our government's plan to help internationally trained newcomers work in their trades and professions. Our government is investing an additional \$14 million in 24 newcomer bridge training programs to help more than 3,000 skilled newcomers work in their chosen field.

For many years our province has benefited from the sweat equity and talents of our immigrants who have chosen to make Ontario their new home, and we continue to benefit from their drive, their skills and the international experience they bring to Ontario. Newcomers have the global experience that Ontario companies need to compete in markets around the world. More than half of recent working-age newcomers have a university degree. Out of 125,000 newcomers who arrive annually in Ontario, about 65,000 are ready to work and contribute to Ontario communities big and small. Of those, 13,000



bring the required global experience to work in regulated professions or trades.

Our announcement today is an investment in our people. We are helping skilled newcomers work in a vast variety of trades, professions that range from carpentry to physiotherapy, engineering, architecture and tourism. These are areas where the internationally trained can put their global experience to work for Ontario's benefit.

Today's new investment brings the Ontario government's total investment in newcomer bridge training programs to more than \$34 million. This funding has supported more than 60 programs which have helped thousands of newcomers work in up to 100 different professions and trades.

Newcomer bridging projects deliver the skills that newcomers need to transition into the Ontario workforce. They offer training and mentoring opportunities that help individuals prepare for licensing exams. These bridge training programs have achieved great results. Thanks to bridge training, the pass rate for internationally trained pharmacists in their licensing exams has gone from 20% up to 80%. For internationally trained nurses, the pass rate has doubled to more than 70%; and for internationally trained midwives who take bridge-training courses, the success rate is 100% passed. They've had great success, and that's why we are expanding them today in 24 additional areas.

1400

With our latest investment, physiotherapists trained abroad, for example, will get the support they need to practise their profession here in Ontario. Carpenters trained overseas will be able to finish their apprenticeships here.

Today's announcement is about investing in Ontario's future, its economic prosperity and competitiveness, and the global economy.

Il est clair que la province est bénéficiaire quand les nouveaux arrivants s'intègrent rapidement. Quand les nouveaux arrivants réussissent, l'Ontario réussit. Ce programme de formation relais est une bonne chose non seulement pour les immigrants mais aussi pour l'Ontario.

Bridge training is just one way our government is helping les nouveaux arrivants reach their full potential. Last November, our government signed the ground-breaking Canada-Ontario immigration agreement. After 20 years, we have finally succeeded in getting the federal government to invest in Ontario's newcomers. It means 920 million in new federal dollars for Ontario's newcomers over the next five years. For the first time in our history, the 125,000 newcomers who come to Ontario every year will receive their fair share of federal dollars.

In March, we launched an international web portal, [Ontarioimmigration.ca](http://Ontarioimmigration.ca). This portal enables potential immigrants to get up-to-date information on everything from credentials and housing to health care and employment opportunities from their countries of origin. They can get this information prior to coming to Ontario, making their transition to Ontario much easier.

In February, we announced a 29% annual increase in newcomer settlement funding so that settlement agencies can better meet the demand for their services and help our newcomers integrate and contribute to their communities.

Ontario's prosperity is dependent on immigration and the global advantage newcomers bring here. The sooner newcomers integrate, upgrade their language skills and work in their field, the sooner we all benefit. The reality is simple: When newcomers succeed, Ontario succeeds.

## SMOKE-FREE ONTARIO

### UN ONTARIO SANS FUMÉE

**Hon. Jim Watson (Minister of Health Promotion):** I rise today in the House to pay tribute to those who have led the way in creating a smoke-free environment in Ontario. May 31 is the culmination of three decades of grassroots work done by volunteers in the charitable, medical, business, public health and research communities.

Il est rare qu'un gouvernement ait le privilège d'adopter une mesure législative qui accomplirait autant de progrès et qui aurait une incidence aussi positive sur la santé de nos électeurs.

However, we must take time to recognize that without the support of the community—and the majority of Ontarians do support a smoke-free Ontario—this progress would not be possible.

Representatives of those community leaders are members of my Smoke-Free Ontario campaign cabinet, many of whom are with us in the gallery today. I'd ask members to recognize them. We welcome them to Queen's Park.

I would like to recognize Mr. Manu Malkani from the Ontario Lung Association, Rocco Rossi from the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario, and Peter Goodhand from the Canadian Cancer Society. These gentlemen represent thousands upon thousands of volunteers who have worked tirelessly to educate the public on the impacts of second-hand smoke, inform us all of the importance of taking action, and advocate to all levels of government for healthy public policy.

The Ontario Lung Association has taken on the role of training and educating youth on the issue and the very positive impact young people can have; the Heart and Stroke Foundation has been integral in promoting public awareness; and the Canadian Cancer Society has led the way in local bylaw initiatives as well as supporting smokers as we create a smoke-free environment.

Dr. Ted Boadway, Dr. Steve Goren and Mr. Marc Kealey represent three separate sectors of professionals who have been leaders as well. The Ontario Medical Association provided sound medical support and advice on the issues around second-hand smoke; the Ontario Dental Association has taken a lead in ensuring that their members provide appropriate counselling to patients; and the Ontario Pharmacists' Association is conducting



public seminars as well as assisting in research related to cessation counselling.

Chief John Beaucage has assisted us in an awareness of issues facing First Nations people and the unique status tobacco has in the native community.

Dr. Andrew Pipe, Ms. Jenny Rajaballe and Dr. Terry Sullivan represent different sectors of the medical community through the Ottawa Heart Institute, Cambridge Memorial Hospital and Cancer Care Ontario.

Grâce à eux, nous avons accès à un réseau de spécialistes travaillant, au nouveau local, en milieu hospitalier de même que dans les domaines de la recherche et de la statistique, qui ont appuyé notre loi et nos mesures en vigueur par des arguments scientifiques, ce qui était nécessaire pour assurer que nous étions sur la bonne voie.

Mr. Michael Perley has been a tremendous source of support and information on everything from the international developments related to smoke-free issues to local community initiatives across Ontario and Canada.

Ms. Isabelle Michel from Sudbury and Ms. Carol Timmings represent our public health departments. There's no question that we had to be aware of the crucial role that public health plays in tobacco issues, everything from education, awareness and enforcement.

Ms. Michelle Tham represents the youth voice on this committee and all of the great work that young people throughout the province are doing through youth action alliances.

Comme vous pouvez le constater, nous avons fait appel aux plus fervents défenseurs d'un environnement sans fumée pour conseiller ce gouvernement au moment où il s'engage sur la voie de l'amélioration de la santé des Ontariennes et des Ontariens.

I want to thank this very talented and committed group of people and acknowledge the effort they represent.

I'm pleased to announce that in a reception just a few moments ago, I was able to present each and every one of these advisers with a Heather Crowe Award in recognition of their work.

I invite all members of the House to join me in congratulating and thanking everyone who helped lay the path for a smoke-free Ontario. My sincere thank you.

*Applause.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Joseph N. Tascona):** No more ministry statements? Time for responses.

### IMMIGRANTS' SKILLS

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman (Oxford):** I rise on behalf of the Progressive Conservative caucus to respond to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration's announcement on bridge training. This announcement is a step in the right direction, but much more needs to be done to ensure that barriers to having professional accreditation recognized in this province are removed. Everyone should be allowed to work to their full potential.

There are thousands of immigrants living in Ontario who have come to Canada, and specifically to Ontario, with expectations of making positive contributions to their communities and making a living on behalf of their families. Government must work hard with them to strengthen the system and remove the barriers they face every day in becoming involved in their professions and getting jobs in this province that they are trained for. I hope that the training funding announced today will take us towards that goal of equal opportunity for everyone, Ontarians and new Ontarians alike.

Thank you very much, Minister, for this announcement, and we look forward to other initiatives to make sure that everyone coming to this province can work to their full potential and achieve what they set out to achieve for their families, their friends and their community when they left their original place to come here and make a new life.

### HEALTH CARE

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod (Nepean-Carleton):** It's a pleasure to bring this message on behalf of the PC Party of Ontario.

The people of Ontario continue to pay more and get less under the McGuinty Liberals. They want a health care system where they get the right care at the right time, but they don't get that from this government. Instead, they get higher taxes and longer wait times.

We've been questioning this minister for months on the data on his wait-times website, data he said was reliable and up to date, data that shows wait times clearly going up in communities across the province. And his response? He twists and turns and contorts himself to find a way to paint a picture that's not based in reality. He highlights the median wait time, which provides an incomplete picture. When he realizes that tactic won't hold up, he holds a press conference, claiming he had new data, which he didn't. He claims it showed that wait times were going down, and it didn't.

Do you know why? Because he deleted a whole month's worth of data. He actually removed data from his website in an attempt to pull the wool over the eyes of the people of Ontario. It was a complete sham. So we asked him about that. We asked this minister why he removed the data. His response? Let me quote from Hansard of May 1, 2006. The minister said:

"When the first wait-time information was provided, several hospitals weren't reporting, including the University Health Network, which is our largest hospital." The UHN wasn't reporting—that's what the minister said. But if one looked at the data from July, the data this minister removed from the website under a veil of silence, under the cover of darkness, one would see very clearly the UHN-reported wait-times data for all five priority areas for the month of July.

*Interjections.*

**Ms. MacLeod:** I can talk over them.



1410

So we asked the minister about that. His response? Again, I quote from May 11, 2006:

"If the honourable member were to be in touch with the University Health Network, they would tell her what they told our ministry, which is that they made mistakes in the data." That's a very different answer from his first, that they didn't report, and a very different claim from October 24, 2005, when the minister said this data was up to date and reliable. Either they didn't report, they did report and were inaccurate, or they did report and were accurate and the minister just didn't like the data. If they made mistakes, then how can we be sure that the data is in fact accurate, especially when it's being politically manipulated by the minister's office?

Even today the minister contradicts himself. He says that wait times are down across the board, but then he says that wait times are up. The minister just can't keep his stories in order. Cancer wait times, he says, are down. Let's look at the data: July, 69 days; February/March, 78 days—an increase, even from December to January.

The people of Ontario deserve a government that's going to be honest with them on this issue, especially when the government confirmed today that seniors are going to have to continue to pay an illegitimate health tax that is providing them with absolutely no relief with respect to wait times.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson (Timmins–James Bay):** I'm going to respond to both those ministers.

First of all, on trying to urge people to quit smoking, it's a great idea. The only problem is, 60 pounds later, here I am. But anyway, I've just got to say, there is a danger on the other side of quitting smoking, now for some 13, 14 years.

#### HEALTH CARE

**Mr. Gilles Bisson (Timmins–James Bay):** I want to also respond to the Minister of Health, who talks about waiting lists. I've got to tell you, the longest waiting lists we have in this province are the undelivered promises that the McGuinty Liberals made in the last election, specifically those to seniors.

We know, for example, that they made some very specific promises while they were in opposition, saying that when they would be government, they would make sure to restore the—excuse me; I'll read it. It would be easier if I read it: "Invest in better nursing home care, providing an additional \$6,000 in care for every resident." This has been raised in the House a number of times. The government promised it in the last election, and yet they haven't done it.

**Hon. George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** It's not true.

**Mr. Bisson:** The minister says it's not true. It's in a leaflet that was sent out by the Liberals.

The other promise they made is that they assured they would get personal care, including bringing back the 2.25 hours of minimum care they would provide, along with

the three baths per week. None of that has been done. The government promised they would do it in the last election. Instead, seniors are still in virtually the same condition they were at the turn of the last election. I say to the government, what is even more galling—it's not bad enough that they made the promises in the last election that they haven't delivered on, but then the promises were made over and over and over again by the Minister of Health in all kinds of examples.

On December 8, 2003, in the *Toronto Star*: "I want to bring a sense of missionary zeal to the work we do in this office...." He was talking specifically about these promises. Has anything been done? No.

On May 11 in the *Toronto Star*: "Many of the changes, to be announced in a news conference today, will require legislative changes and will be part of the reform package Smitherman said he will introduce in the fall session." That was 2004. Fall 2004 came and nothing happened; no delivery, no legislation.

We take a look at other comments made by the minister. On February 26, 2005, the *Brantford Expositor* says, "Important new legislation is expected to be introduced shortly." That was February 26, 2005, and it's still not here.

So I say to the government, if you're going to make promises in the last election and say that you're going to make life better for seniors living in long-term-care facilities, the very least you can do is keep them. But what is really worse is to get back after you're elected and say that you're going to do it, and three years later we're virtually where we were three years ago. I say to the government, it would be about time that you keep at least one of your promises.

#### IMMIGRANTS' SKILLS

**Mr. Peter Tabuns (Toronto–Danforth):** I rise to address the announcement made by the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration. For a first step, it would be pretty good, but it's not enough. The minister knows that, I am sure.

To the Acting Premier: Please talk to the Premier and give this minister the budget he needs to deliver the programs and the assistance that newcomers to this country have to have.

What are we told? Three thousand new positions over the next three years, but more than 36,000 newcomers. Six thousand have been helped over the last three years. It sounds like we're declining.

I've talked to people in the newcomer communities: people from mainland China, from Bangladesh, from India. They're very angry. They're bitter. They go through the long process of coming to Canada. They come forward with their credentials. These are people who work hard, who want to work hard, who have skills and knowledge and commitment that could make a huge difference to this country.

I talked to a doctor from Bangladesh. At the last interview he had, he was asked in the store where he was



applying, "So how much can you lift at a time?" This is not enough to deal with the profound problem we have in our society. Acting Premier, please make sure that in the next cabinet meeting the Premier gives the minister the money he needs to do the job that I know he wants to do.

We have problems beyond funding. The Thomson report came out last fall. It called for an independent assessment appeals process so that people who have professional qualifications, if it were contested about whether those were adequate, would have a place to go.

I haven't heard a peep. Why don't we go ahead with those things that would not cost this government a lot, not cost this province a lot, but would make a huge difference to people's lives? This announcement is far too little. It has to be built up; it has to be funded properly—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Joseph N. Tascona):** Thank you.

**Mr. Tabuns:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I just want to acknowledge Kelsey Bishop, a page from my riding, who served quite well here this past month. Thank you, Kelsey.

**The Acting Speaker:** They've all served very well.

## DEFERRED VOTES

### CLEAN WATER ACT, 2006

#### LOI DE 2006 SUR L'EAU SAINE

Deferred vote on the motion for second reading of Bill 43, An Act to protect existing and future sources of drinking water and to make complementary and other amendments to other Acts / Projet de loi 43, Loi visant à protéger les sources existantes et futures d'eau potable et à apporter des modifications complémentaires et autres à d'autres lois.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Joseph N. Tascona):** Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1417 to 1422.*

**The Acting Speaker:** All those in favour, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

#### Ayes

Arthurs, Wayne  
Berardinetti, Lorenzo  
Bountrogianni, Marie  
Bradley, James J.  
Broten, Laurel C.  
Bryant, Michael  
Caplan, David  
Chambers, Mary Anne V.  
Colle, Mike  
Cordiano, Joseph  
Delaney, Bob  
Dhillon, Vic  
Di Cocco, Caroline  
Dombrowsky, Leona  
Duguid, Brad

Duncan, Dwight  
Flynn, Kevin Daniel  
Fonseca, Peter  
Jeffrey, Linda  
Kular, Kuldip  
Lalonde, Jean-Marc  
Levac, Dave  
Marchese, Rosario  
Marsales, Judy  
McNeely, Phil  
Meilleur, Madeleine  
Milloy, John  
Mossop, Jennifer F.  
Peters, Steve  
Phillips, Gerry

Pupatello, Sandra  
Racco, Mario G.  
Ramsay, David  
Sandals, Liz  
Smith, Monique  
Smitherman, George  
Tabuns, Peter  
Takhar, Harinder S.  
Watson, Jim  
Wilkinson, John  
Wong, Tony C.  
Wynne, Kathleen O.  
Zimmer, David

**The Acting Speaker:** All those opposed will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

#### Nays

Chudleigh, Ted  
Hardeman, Ernie  
Hudak, Tim  
MacLeod, Lisa

Miller, Norm  
Ouellette, Jerry J.  
Runciman, Robert W.  
Scott, Laurie

Wilson, Jim  
Yakabuski, John

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Claude L. DesRosiers):** The ayes are 43; the nays are 10.

**The Acting Speaker:** The motion is carried.

Shall the bill be ordered for third reading?

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten (Minister of the Environment):** I'd like to send the bill to the committee on social policy.

**The Acting Speaker:** So ordered.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### FOOD SAFETY

**Mr. Robert W. Runciman (Leeds-Grenville):** My question is to the Minister of Health. It deals with the regulation of farmers' markets and church suppers and the McGuinty Liberals' assault on rural Ontario.

A recent SES poll confirmed a growing belief among Ontarians, including urban Ontarians, that the McGuinty government favours urban over rural, that rural Ontario is getting the short end of the stick.

Yesterday, to great applause, you announced an exemption for farmers' markets from your onerous regulations, but today—there's a "but" along with this—we read that that exemption is not permanent. Minister, would you clarify your position: Are you exempting farmers' markets or just playing a political delay game?

**Hon. George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** Let's be clear in a fashion that the member's rhetoric doesn't allow. The regulation, regulation 562, has been on the books for 16 years, since 1990, and it remained on the books all through the days that that gentleman had the privilege of serving in the cabinet of the province of Ontario.

We've been working with Farmers' Markets Ontario and through the office of the chief medical officer of health to take a different approach with respect to farmers' markets, working co-operatively with them. What we felt was appropriate through the course of the summer season—which is important, of course, for farmers' markets—was that we work on a proactive basis with vendors and others to inform them of some of the risks that are associated with some of the products. The honourable member scoffs at risks, but I do believe that drinking unpasteurized milk, as one example, wouldn't be prudent. We have seen circumstances in Ontario where that has occurred.

We're working to identify risks on a proactive basis, along with the vendors and Farmers' Markets Ontario, because we recognize that this institution, in rural and urban Ontario, is essential, a great piece of culture and good economics. Accordingly, we want to work alongside those who believe that farmers' markets have a place not just today but well into the future, and we're securing the future.

**Mr. Runciman:** The example the minister continues to use is dead wrong. The provincial medical officer of health has said that there has not been one incident in 20 years.

I think the reality is that the McGuinty Liberal government is dead set on regulating the ingredients of grandma's apple pie instead of concentrating on the real problems in our health care system. We've got a downtown Toronto minister telling rural Ontarians what's good for them, trying to solve a problem that doesn't exist.

You are playing politics with the traditions of rural Ontario because you're feeling the heat and your backbenchers are feeling the heat; we've got an election on the horizon. Minister, will you do the right thing and stand up today and announce a permanent exemption?

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** Firstly, the honourable member's misinformation stream continues. He wants to talk about the circumstance that the chief medical officer of health has indicated that there have been no occasions in the last 20 years when people have suffered the consequences of drinking unpasteurized milk. He needs to go on a website and Google-search it and see the circumstances associated with the very same occurrence in your community. We had the hospitalization last year at Southlake hospital of young children who drank unpasteurized milk. It's an example of risks that the honourable member likes to pretend don't exist. It seems that the honourable member doesn't agree that there's a risk associated with, as an example, chieving up some chicken that's been sitting out in the sun.

Of course, farmers' markets are amazing. We have them at city hall here in downtown Toronto, and we support them. We want to be able to bring good-quality product to market. We want to support farmers' markets, and we want to do so in a fashion alongside them that does indicate that there are risks, that we take a proactive approach to work our way through any of those risks. We believe that's prudent and gives us a chance to support farmers' markets.

1430

**Mr. Runciman:** The minister continues to play people for fools on this issue. They know that they're not getting unpasteurized milk at farmers' markets.

Minister, the McGuinty Liberal approach seems to be to calm the waters before the election, then hit them hard when it's over. You pulled the wool over voters' eyes in the last election; they're not going to fall for your flim-flam again. What you're really saying, when you cut through the rhetoric, is that once the election is over it's the last supper for church suppers.

Minister, if yesterday's announcement wasn't just another political con job, commit today to announcing the Liberal policy on regulations of farmers' markets and church suppers. Commit to making that announcement no later than this fall.

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** The honourable member for flim-flam stands and makes a statement like that, and he still hasn't fessed up to the people of Ontario for his lack of courage as a member of a previous government that stood at Magna and pretended the books were in balance while all the while it was masking a \$5.6-billion deficit. That's that honourable member's record.

That honourable member stood in the government that had farmers' markets regulated as if they were the same as restaurants and grocery stores, and we won't. It's our abiding recognition of the value of farmers' markets from a cultural and economic standpoint that sees us move forward on a proactive basis, which acknowledges that we must work together to make sure that farmers' markets not only survive but that they thrive. Accordingly, these are the policies this government will be on the side of.

When you take away the rhetoric from that honourable member's suggestions, there is nothing left but the ether.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Joseph N. Tascona):** The Chair recognizes the member for Leeds–Grenville: a supplementary question?

**Mr. Runciman:** The Minister of Health must have a Ph.D. in fabrication, because none of that was true.

## LIQUOR CONTROL BOARD OF ONTARIO

**Mr. Robert W. Runciman (Leeds–Grenville):** My question is to the Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal. Your government has opted to appoint an acting chair at the LCBO who we understand is working on a part-time basis; in other words, part-time oversight of the biggest revenue-generating agency the government has. Can you explain why you feel that part-time oversight of this \$3-billion business is appropriate?

**Hon. Sandra Pupatello (Minister of Education, minister responsible for women's issues):** No more trips for you, Bob—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Joseph N. Tascona):** Order. The Minister of Education, I'd like to hear the member, okay?

**Hon. David Caplan (Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal, Deputy Government House Leader):** We've had absolutely wonderful oversight of the LCBO historically, and I want to certainly pay tribute to Andrew Brandt, who led your LCBO with distinction for almost 15 years. Mr. Brandt decided to retire, and of course the vice-chair is acting as the chair until such time as a permanent decision is rendered.

As the legislation provides, it is a combined chair-president-CEO, and in the place of the president and CEO, Bob Peter, vice-president, is in that acting position as well until such time as we finalize and engage the board.



I want the member to absolutely rest assured that we have continuity on the LCBO board, that we have outstanding members of that board who have been ratified by the government agencies committee of this Legislature. I have full confidence in the vice-chair and now the acting chair, and in the new acting president and CEO to carry on their responsibilities for the social mandate, the revenue mandate and the support for important Ontario industries at the LCBO.

**Mr. Runciman:** Minister, what you've done here is rewarded a very active Liberal fundraiser, one Philip Olsson, through appointment to a job that has significant perks attached to it. But the real issue is oversight. You've increased the powers of the president, as you just indicated. You've appointed a Liberal bagman, who apparently only shows up one day a week to keep an eye on a \$3-billion enterprise.

Minister, I ask you again, other than rewarding your Liberal friends, why would you appoint a part-time chair for such an important government agency? Why would you do that?

**Hon. Mr. Caplan:** I think I've answered the question. The member's rhetoric, quite frankly, is over the top.

Mr. Olsson and I were attending a wonderful event, launching Ontario's craft breweries and the official launch of summer earlier this week at the Summerhill LCBO store, a wonderful opportunity to promote the Ontario craft brewing industry. The chair of the LCBO, the acting president and CEO, did a phenomenal job supporting Ontario product, providing the kind of leadership that Ontarians would expect, making sure the LCBO is meeting not only the revenue mandate but also the social responsibility mandate that Ontarians would expect.

All appointments, of course, go through a proper process. They're vetted by the government agencies committee, and the member well knows that. In fact, that committee is chaired by a member of the opposition. They've reported to this Legislature. The positions were ratified and the vice-chair is in an acting position.

**Mr. Runciman:** That trip the minister mentioned is one day a week on the way to a Liberal fundraiser.

Minister, your government is clearly playing games with this situation. You've appointed Mr. Olsson on a part-time basis to avoid legislative scrutiny. We've already had issues raised in this House about the LCBO promoting foreign products, to the detriment of local producers. You've given LCBO management a free hand, with virtually no oversight, with a chair who, we're told, shows up for work one day a week. We believe this is wrong-headed and not in the best interests of Ontario taxpayers. We ask you to consent to having Mr. Olsson appear before the government agencies committee to review his appointment, his terms of employment and his mandate. Will you do that?

**Hon. Mr. Caplan:** The member is full of hot air, quite frankly. The LCBO has a very important role, not only to promote social responsibility and the responsible use of alcohol, not only to enhance the revenues that Ontarians have come to expect to invest in health, education and

infrastructure, but also to provide important supports to the Ontario industry. That includes a \$2-million, five-year strategy of investing annually in the wine and grape industry and having the Ontario industry as a feature of the month in Food and Drink magazine. This is the kind of leadership Mr. Olsson and the board have brought to the LCBO and to supporting what I think Ontarians would want to know is in place. We have important support.

**Hon. James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, Government House Leader):** I think Bob Runciman should be the new chair, myself.

**Hon. Mr. Caplan:** Well, I don't agree with the Minister of Tourism, but I can tell you that when the government agencies committee met, the member from Waterloo supported the appointment of Mr. Olsson to the LCBO.

#### GOVERNMENT WEBSITE

**Mr. Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre):** A question to the Acting Premier: Who got the contract to design the government of Ontario website, and what ties, if any, does that person have to the Ontario Liberal Party?

**Hon. Leona Dombrowsky (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs):** I'm very happy to have an opportunity to talk about the website, especially the website we now have in place where our Premier has an opportunity to interact with Ontarians. I can say to the honourable member as well that we're very impressed with the way it has been presented and, obviously, with the up-to-date technological skills that our civil service has demonstrated.

**Hon. James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, Government House Leader):** The cabinet office.

**Hon. Mrs. Dombrowsky:** It has been cabinet office. They have designed the site. They have provided the government with the resources we need to bring this kind of site to the people of Ontario so they can interact with their Premier.

**Mr. Kormos:** We were extremely concerned to learn that Dalton McGuinty, the self-proclaimed champ of squeaky-clean government, has awarded the government of Ontario website contract to Ontario Liberal Party website guy Lorne Kinsella, the brother of Warren Kinsella, one of the Premier's key political advisers. How much did the McGuinty government pay Mr. Kinsella to design the Ontario government website, and what other contracts have you awarded him?

1440

**Hon. Mrs. Dombrowsky:** I was having some difficulty hearing, but I believe the name you identified was Lorne Kinsella, who is a civil servant. Again, I say to the people of Ontario that I believe the civil service have demonstrated that they have some extraordinary ability.

Our government has made it very clear that we want to be open and accessible. The Premier certainly wants to



be that way. We want to inform people about what we're doing. We want to invite them to share their issues, their opinions, their concerns with the Premier, and that is why we have constructed this site.

With respect to the gentleman the member has identified, I believe if he were to go to the government phone book, he would find that he is a member of the civil service.

**Mr. Kormos:** I'm sending Haakim, the page, over with some copies of the front pages of these websites, including Mr. Kinsella's. Take that to the Acting Premier.

A quick visit to Mr. Kinsella's personal website shows that he has also designed websites for the Ministries of Education; Training, Colleges and Universities; Natural Resources; Finance; and Research and Innovation, not to mention the website for the Premier himself. Talk about a Liberal culture of entitlement. What's your explanation for this seeming patronage spree from Dalton McGuinty to Lorne Kinsella, the Liberal Party website guy and brother of one of the Premier's key political advisers?

**Hon. Mrs. Dombrowsky:** I have to say that I'm very surprised that it would be a member of the NDP in this Legislature who is bringing this kind of information and these kinds of accusations about a member of our public service, a member of the civil service. As I've indicated to the honourable member, what you need to do is get the civil service directory and you will find this person's name. You will appreciate that he is an employee of the civil service. We thank them, all of them, for the good work they do on behalf of the people of Ontario. They have done a splendid job on this website as well.

### AIR QUALITY

**Mr. Peter Tabuns (Toronto-Danforth):** To the Acting Premier: Working families in Bath and the greater Kingston area are worried. You know the area well. They're worried because a big cement company has plans to burn tires in their backyard. They don't want their environment polluted. They don't want to breathe in toxin-filled smoke. They don't want the poisons that this kind of burning will pump out of this kiln. They want the government to stand up for clean air and clean water by saying no to burning tires in Bath. Why haven't you said no, Acting Premier? Why do you refuse to say no to burning tires in Bath?

**Hon. Leona Dombrowsky (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs):** The Minister of the Environment.

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten (Minister of the Environment):** I am very pleased to have a chance to clearly stand up for clean air and clean water in this province. You should know, member opposite, and I will inform you, that one of my very first announcements as I became Minister of the Environment was to improve our air emission standards by regulation 419, the biggest move on this file in 25 years. We have some of the toughest air standards in all of North America and comparable with many jurisdictions in Europe.

I thank the groups that have raised concerns. The process that is under way right now with the examination is as a result of Lafarge bringing forward an application to replace some of its fuel with items that cannot be recycled. They've made that application. The ministry is examining the evidence and information that is before it. The director will be reviewing that material and the director will make a decision. But you should be very clear that I have made indication to the director that I expect, with all the proposals that come forward to my department, that they use the most up-to-date science, the newest and best emissions modelling data and our new tough air standards when they evaluate all projects, and that's what's going to happen with this facility in Bath.

**Mr. Tabuns:** Notwithstanding that, a coalition of local residents and environmental groups came to Queen's Park today with a warning: Burning tires will harm human health and the environment. They urged Ontario to avoid the mistakes of Quebec. Quebec allows a Lafarge cement kiln in Saint-Constant to burn tires, despite a 700% increase in the emission of cancer-causing dioxins and furans between 2000 and 2004. They want you to say no to burning tires in Bath. Will you say no to the burning of tires in Bath?

**Hon. Ms. Broten:** Perhaps the member opposite does not understand how this process works. The company has applied for a certificate of approval. That is in the director's hands. We have had 90 days of public comment period. I appreciate all the groups that have brought forward all of the evidence, and I say to them that we will examine the most up-to-date science, and the director, in examining that, will require that Lafarge demonstrate that its proposal meets all of our minister's requirements and that it abides by the laws of Ontario, including the Waste Diversion Act.

That's my commitment to the people of Bath. That's what Lafarge will have to live up to. We will make a decision in the Ministry of the Environment by way of the director in examining all of the facts, not the fiction.

**Mr. Tabuns:** Minister, you promised working families a tire recycling program so we could dispose of used tires safely and responsibly. Then last month, you turned around and shelved the development of a provincial program for recycling tires. Now we see the consequences. A company is lining up to become the first cement kiln operator to burn tires in the history of Ontario, and it's the people and the environment in the Kingston area who will pay the price for your inaction.

You've just said they're not burning things that can be recycled. Well, tires can be recycled. You know that. Instead of burning tires, why don't you come up with a plan to recycle tires like you have promised?

**Hon. Ms. Broten:** Again, my friend does not seem to understand that not all tires meet the requirements that allow them to be recycled, but those that can be recycled will be recycled in this province.

Some of the tires are not, in substance, capable of being recycled. That is the application made by Lafarge on which, let's be clear, no decision has been made. But I



want to inform you about what the science tells us. The science tells us that Lafarge's proposal will reduce both sulphur dioxide emissions and nitrogen oxide emissions from what they are currently consuming as fuel in this facility. That's the type of science that will be examined when a decision is made.

Again, to be clear, what have I said with respect to tires? I have directed my ministry to mitigate the potential adverse effects of existing stockpiles in the province and to discourage those stockpiles. I have told Waste Diversion Ontario to start first with two programs that I think meet the needs of Ontarians first, household hazardous waste and electronics, and then we will move on to other projects.

### NATIVE LAND DISPUTE

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North):** My question today is for the minister responsible for aboriginal affairs. As we approach the Victoria Day holiday weekend, the situation at Caledonia has dragged on for 78 days. The situation has cost the OPP millions of dollars out of their budget, and the situation is taking valuable resources from the OPP when they are required in other services, particularly on a busy holiday weekend like this.

The citizens of Caledonia are extremely frustrated, as are the First Nations. Your government sat around for almost two months before you finally brought in David Peterson to act as a mediator. Now today in Murray Campbell's column in the *Globe and Mail* we learn that Mr. Peterson is making virtually no progress.

Minister, can you tell this House what your alternative plan is to end the dispute, and are you or the Premier at least going to visit the citizens of Caledonia and show them that you're interested in resolving this situation?

**Hon. David Ramsay (Minister of Natural Resources, minister responsible for aboriginal affairs):** I would say to the member that all the pieces really are starting to fall into place with this proposal now. We are working with the community. David Peterson is making very good progress. As the member knows, we have passage around one of the barricades, and we continue to work with the First Nation community to get some further progress on that, because obviously we want to see all the barricades removed.

We're working with the community. In fact, David Peterson had a meeting this morning with municipal and business officials in the Caledonia community that was very positive. He thanked them for the patience they are bringing to this and their understanding, and we ask for calm and quiet through the weekend. We feel that we're very close to an ultimate solution to this.

1450

**Mr. Dunlop:** It's beginning to appear that as the McGuinty government sat around for two months, you simply thought the problem would go away. You don't have a plan, and it now seems that Mr. Peterson could actually be mediating until Christmas Eve.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Joseph N. Tascona):** Minister of Health, I can hear you but I can't hear the questioner. I want to hear the questioner.

**Mr. Dunlop:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I don't think we've seen a lot of leadership on this issue. However, Minister, we understand from a letter dated yesterday from yourself to the Six Nations Confederacy council that you are imposing an immediate moratorium, halting any development on the Douglas Creek Estates. Can you give us a few details on this moratorium? For example, are the citizens of Caledonia aware of the moratorium? Is the developer of Douglas Creek Estates aware of the moratorium? What is the length of the moratorium? And what is your plan if the Six Nations Confederacy council does not agree to the terms of the moratorium?

**Hon. Mr. Ramsay:** The public is aware of the moratorium. The First Nations community released the letter to the public yesterday. The idea of the moratorium is to allow us some time for the long-term group, made up of the federal representative, Barbara McDougall, and the provincial representative, Jane Stewart, to work out a final disposition of the Douglas Creek Estates lands. This way, putting in a moratorium that brings calm to the situation, gives us time to deal with the long-term development issues and the long-term land claim issues in that area. It is one of many initiatives that we've started in order to expedite this process. It is, from our side, a sign of good faith to seek a peaceful resolution to this.

### EDUCATION FUNDING

**Mr. Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina):** A question to the Minister of Education: Dalton McGuinty keeps declaring that he has fixed the problems in education, but every day we see new examples of schools struggling to meet the needs of our students. In Toronto, the school board has been reduced to seeking donations from charitable organizations like the United Way so they can avoid cuts. Trustees say they will soon be forced to close schools because your funding formula doesn't provide the money the kids need. When are you going to keep your promise, fix the funding formula and provide schools with the funds they need to stop the cutting?

**Hon. Sandra Pupatello (Minister of Education, minister responsible for women's issues):** I appreciate the question from the education critic in the NDP caucus. I will tell this member that in fact our government, over the last two years, has invested \$2 billion in the education system. And it hasn't just been poured in willy-nilly through grants to boards; we have been very specific about what we're requiring. We have set the bar very high on an educational quality standard. Finally we are talking about education from a quality perspective. It really is about the fact that kids graduate and not have 30% dropout rates, as was the case under their government. Likewise, test scores—how our kids are actually doing on literacy and numeracy while they're in those junior years—are key elements. Those are the



things we're interested in. We are funding the system. And I am proud to say that we are partnering with this particular school board. We know they need help and we will be there for them.

**Mr. Marchese:** The minister talks about quality, yet schools are struggling and students are suffering. In Windsor, where you're from, new Canadians who need English-as-a-second-language instruction aren't getting the help they need. The public board does not even provide ESL instruction to students in grades 1 through 3, and the Catholic board has seven teachers serving over 300 students. Boards say they don't have enough money to do better. Children who come to Canada have a right to learn English. When are you going to keep your promise, fix the Conservative funding formula and provide schools with the funds they need to stop the cutting?

**Hon. Sandra Pupatello:** I very much appreciate this question as well. As far as the Windsor school boards are concerned, I am extremely proud of the schools in my riding, because when you look at the qualitative results in my home town, our school boards, our schools, our teachers, our helpmates in the classroom are doing an excellent job. Let me say that right now.

Secondly, when it comes to how we will partner with our school boards, so that we will work with them—because they do need supports. They need supports from us, unlike the NDP government, which in 1993 cut funding to every single school board, despite the fact that those same needs for English as a second language were there.

I want to ask this member: With the level of new immigrants coming to Ontario's schools and the demand for English as a second language, how dare you cut those programs?

## WATER QUALITY

**Mrs. Liz Sandals (Guelph-Wellington):** My question is for the Minister of the Environment. Six years ago this Victoria Day weekend, the people of Walkerton learned that something was terribly wrong with their tap water. For several days, the town's residents had unknowingly consumed tap water which was contaminated with the bacteria *E. coli*. The devastating consequences—seven dead, over 2,300 ill and hundreds still burdened with related illnesses today—must not be forgotten.

Our government came to office in October 2003 with a commitment to implement the recommendations of Commissioner O'Connor's inquiry into the Walkerton tragedy. I know that you, your predecessor and the Premier have each been clear that the devastating consequences of the Walkerton tragedy must not be forgotten and we must not waiver in our commitment to implement the recommendations.

What progress has been made to date in implementing Commissioner O'Connor's recommendations, and what assurances can you provide to the people of Walkerton, and to all Ontarians, that the Walkerton tragedy will not be forgotten?

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten (Minister of the Environment):** I want to say, on behalf of our government, that we will not forget what happened in Walkerton.

I had the privilege most recently of attending in Walkerton with my colleague Carol Mitchell, meeting with the mayor, concerned citizens of Walkerton and the Walkerton Clean Water Centre, and talking to some of those individuals for whom this tragedy was very, very personal. As each of us takes a look at what steps we need to take in this House to move our province forward in the protection of water, we cannot forget those seven people who died and we cannot forget 2,300 people who were ill.

I often think about the importance of protecting drinking water in our province as I'm making formula for my young baby boys, now seven months old, and how critical a source of drinking water is to the lives and healthiness of all of us.

We're absolutely committed to meeting the Walkerton recommendations. Sixty-five of 121 have been met—38 since we became the government. We have done things like hiring more water inspectors, putting in tough certification, requiring annual inspections and appointing a chief drinking water inspector. Twenty-two more recommendations will be met when we pass—and I do hope we will—the Clean Water Act in this House.

Those are the steps we are taking for the people of Walkerton.

**Mrs. Sandals:** Thank you for providing the people of Walkerton, and all Ontarians, with the reassurance that the devastating consequences of the Walkerton tragedy are not being forgotten.

You mentioned our government's proposed Clean Water Act, which we actually just gave second reading approval to earlier this afternoon. The people in my riding are very interested in finding some means of better protecting their drinking water. Most, if not all, draw their drinking water from groundwater sources, which can easily be contaminated by various human activities. Minister, could you please explain to me and my constituents how the Clean Water Act, if passed, would ensure that my constituents' groundwater is better protected from contamination?

**Hon. Ms. Broten:** I want to say that, absolutely, the Clean Water Act is the linchpin of our government's comprehensive strategy to ensure clean and protected safe drinking water in this province.

As we talk about the Clean Water Act, we should all remember Justice O'Connor's first recommendation: "Drinking water sources should be protected by developing watershed-based source protection plans," the first barrier in a multiple-barrier system. That's what the Clean Water Act is all about.

The proposed Clean Water Act will empower municipalities and conservation authorities to map out sources of drinking water, identify threats, take action on those threats, to reduce them and take preventative measures.

For the very first time, we'll have an understanding of the quality and quantity of drinking water in our prov-



ince. I would encourage all members of this House to support the government's Clean Water Act.

1500

### HEALTH PREMIUMS

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod (Nepean—Carleton):** My question is for the Acting Premier. The McGuinty government broke a key election promise not to raise taxes, by instituting the illegitimate health tax. This tax is unfair to seniors, who are now paying more and getting less because you rolled back the seniors' tax credit, you delisted health care services, and you have now stung them with \$450 more in taxes by the way of this health tax.

My question for the Acting Premier is this: Why is this Liberal government against our seniors who are on fixed incomes? Why did your entire caucus vote against my resolution this morning? Acting Premier, when will you listen to seniors across Ontario who are petitioning this Legislature and demanding that you eliminate this illegitimate health tax for Ontarians who are over the age of 65?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan (Minister of Finance, Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet):** We voted against her ill-conceived resolution because we will not cut health care services to seniors by \$2.5 billion.

Let me say to the member, those senior citizens want shorter wait times, and under this government, they're getting them. Those senior citizens don't want hospital closures like you did; they want hospital beds open. Those senior citizens want long-term care, good long-term care, something you took away from them.

We're investing \$2.5 billion in public health care to ensure that the senior citizens of this province, who worked so hard and so long, can continue to access the finest health care we have.

Your resolution was ill-conceived, ill-thought-out. We will not cut services to seniors by \$2.5 billion.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Joseph N. Tascona):** The member for Nepean—Carleton—order. Order.

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker:** Minister of Health Promotion, I don't need your help, okay?

The member for Nepean—Carleton, if you're going to ask a question, let the response come, okay? Supplementary, the member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke.

**Mr. John Yakabuski (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke):** You know, that \$2.5 billion doesn't go to health care for our brave men and women in the military. But you continue to dip into their pockets, while they're serving this country around the world. You continue to dip into their pockets for that illegitimate, illegal, regressive, filthy health care tax.

I'm asking the minister now: Today, of all days, will you finally accept that fairness for our brave men and women is the order of the day, or will you continue to insult their efforts around the world and continue to charge them this tax? I'm asking you one more time,

please show fairness and exempt the men and women of our military—who are not eligible for health care from this province—and allow them to be exempt from this punitive health care tax. One more time—

**The Acting Speaker:** I think we have time for an answer to the questions. Minister.

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** Having a well-functioning health care system is, in fact, vital to our brave men and women who serve in the military and their families.

I further say that the RCMP need that health care system, too. I'm quite surprised that when the member opposite says that they don't benefit from it, he forgets that right in his own riding, at CFB Petawawa—that's in your riding—there's a family health team, paid for by the government of Ontario through this health premium.

Unlike the members opposite, we are investing in health care. Unlike the member opposite, whose government cut \$557 million from hospitals, we're investing in them. Unlike the member, whose government closed 7,000 hospital beds, we're opening hospital beds. Unlike that member's government, which fired 10,000 nurses, we're hiring nurses. So I say to the honourable member opposite, tell the people of Ontario where you're going to cut \$2.5 billion out of public health care, because you can't hide the truth from them anymore. Your record—

**The Acting Speaker:** Thank you. Member, take your seat. New question?

### AMBULANCE SERVICE

**Ms. Andrea Horwath (Hamilton East):** My question is for the Minister of Health. For a period of time yesterday, the city of Hamilton was without a single ambulance to respond to emergency calls. The critical shortage, as you probably know, lasted between 1:10 and 2:20 p.m., when the number of available vehicles ranged from zero to four for an entire city of almost half a million people.

On April 25, I alerted you to a growing crisis in our ambulance service. I wrote to you after the son of Tina Fougere had to wait an agonizing 34 minutes for an ambulance to respond to a grand mal seizure that he had in a school in Winona. Your ministry was supposed to investigate this, Minister. What has been the outcome of that investigation, and what are you doing to ensure that the residents of Winona and Hamilton won't find themselves without ambulance service again?

**Hon. George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** The emergency health services branch is investigating the circumstances related to the matter that the honourable member raises. Of course, it was already well known within the ministry.

Obviously, the honourable member asks the question, what are we doing with respect to this? The Premier demonstrated a good bit of leadership on the issue of ambulance funding through the very recent contribution of an additional \$50 million flowed by the Minister of Finance to address some of those challenges with respect to ambulance funding. We're on record as indicating that \$300 million will be invested over three years to enhance



the quality of the partnership as it relates to ambulance. We've also worked very vigorously through the hospital system, with initiatives being implemented to address the challenges with ambulance off-load delays, very often one of the challenges that leads to these symptoms.

We recognize that this is not an ideal circumstance. The challenges that are being faced in Hamilton are being addressed head-on through a review of what's gone down from the standpoint of protocols and through additional resources. I'm happy to take any suggestions the honourable member has about other steps we might take.

**Ms. Horwath:** Minister, as you probably know, fire and police responded very well to that emergency and on time, but the ambulance did not. It's not, unfortunately, an isolated case. The problem is acute in Winona, and it's spreading Hamilton-wide.

Tina's son, Nathan, is autistic. He suffered a six-minute seizure and then lapsed into a comatose state. But for some reason, the operators downgraded his condition to non-emergency status. All that Tina Fougere wants are some answers, and why her son was downgraded is the most important one. Why did the ministry mess up? What is it you're going to do about it, not only when you're going to answer her—so a time frame in terms of a response to this woman's questions—but when you're going to make sure that Hamilton is going to have an assured overall ambulance system that Hamiltonians can rely on for our growing city?

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** It would be far more helpful if the honourable member didn't pretend that—a significant element of this service includes that which is led by the people in Hamilton themselves. I acknowledge that the ministry has got a review under way to take a look at the circumstances that relate to Winona, but if there is a circumstance where ambulance times in Winona stand out as a particular challenge, then obviously the local municipality, the upper-tier municipality, as the provider of the service, has an obligation as well to make sure the service is functioning well.

We've provided increased funding since we came to office of more than \$1.5 million to ambulance service in Hamilton. I recognize, as the honourable member has indicated, that the circumstances have not been satisfactory. We agree. Accordingly, that's why we're reviewing the circumstances. Once that review is complete, we will work to be able to assure the family that we've looked at it and as to what corrective measures are being undertaken. I thank the honourable member for the question.

#### BORDER SECURITY

**Ms. Kathleen O. Wynne (Don Valley West):** My question is for the Minister of Tourism. I've been following the proposed passport requirements for entering the United States very carefully, with all Ontarians, and people and businesses in Toronto are obviously very concerned about the implications this proposed legislation could have on tourism and prosperity in the city.

Obviously, tourism in Toronto as a whole has an impact on Don Valley West, but the Ontario Science Centre is located in my riding and is a real draw for people from across the country and across the border. The recent Body Works exhibit was a terrific example of the kind of innovative, educational exhibit that draws thousands of people to this city.

Minister, I understand that our government has been working tirelessly on this issue. Can you update the House on the status of the US passport proposal?

1510

**Hon. James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, Government House Leader):** I certainly can, and I thank you for this important question. It was just yesterday that the good news came out of the United States Senate that in fact the Senate had voted to extend the date for implementation of the passport requirement back to June 1, 2009. Now, we haven't won the war but we've won an important battle.

Another important event taking place is the meeting of top-level North American representatives in Gimli, Manitoba, at the end of the month. Premier McGuinty will be joining other Canadian Premiers, ambassadors for Canada and the US and a number of representatives of both countries to discuss the border issues.

Today I spoke to Senator Patrick Leahy of Vermont and to the office of Senator Ted Stevens of Alaska about their legislation that they brought through, what the prospects are of going through the House and what Ontario could do and Canadians could do to assist them in their efforts. You see, it is not a battle between Canada and the United States but between those of us along the border who understand the importance of this issue and some who may not understand the implications.

**Ms. Wynne:** It sounds like there are a lot of positive things happening. I've heard you say a number of times in this House that this proposal would have devastating impacts on the tourism industry, not only in Ontario but all across Canada and the United States.

There are those of us who have said that we're wasting our time fighting the provisions of the western hemisphere travel initiative, that we should abandon our efforts to delay the implementation of the passport requirements and simply comply with this ill-advised law. But our government obviously has refused to capitulate on this issue and has vigorously pursued it with allies on the subject.

Minister, what approach do you believe will be the most effective in delaying and altering the requirements found in the US legislation?

**Hon. Mr. Bradley:** We've consistently taken a proactive stance in this particular issue. I've always been optimistic that US officials will recognize that the interest in tourism and trade for both countries is the same and that requiring passports to enter the US or Canada was a big mistake. Despite the prophets of pessimism out there who said this was a done deal, that somehow we must roll over and play dead and comply



with this, Ontario has said we shouldn't do that, that in fact we should continue to make representations.

That's why, on behalf of Ontario last fall, I filed a submission with the United States Department of Homeland Security opposing the passport requirement, seeking a delay in implementation and proposing better alternatives. I've written some op-ed pieces that have been published in many publications in the US. We'll continue to work with our American allies and friends and all Canadians of goodwill in ensuring that we win this particular battle for the people of Ontario. We will stand up for Ontario.

### PROPERTY TAXATION

**Mr. Tim Hudak (Erie-Lincoln):** I have a question for the Minister of Finance. I understand that the McGuinty government remains paralyzed when it comes to addressing skyrocketing property assessments across Ontario. Because the minister is frozen in place, his only option is, it appears, to cancel upcoming assessments and try to sneak by the next election without offering any permanent solution for Ontario taxpayers. Is what the opposition hears true, Minister, that you're about to freeze assessments and try to sneak by taxpayers in 2007?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan (Minister of Finance, Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet):** The question coming from that member is absolutely hilarious.

**Hon. Gerry Phillips (Minister of Government Services):** Very rich.

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** It is rich. It's very rich. On eight separate occasions they introduced and passed legislation. Seven of those times they were correcting their own faults. They left the last piece, with all of its challenges.

The government of Ontario is currently responding to the Ombudsman's initial recommendations. We are in the process, both through MPAC and the recommendations specific to them, of ensuring that those changes are being implemented. With respect to the three recommendations that came to us, we're implementing there. We continue to consult and work with the people not only of this Legislature but of Ontario as we move forward into the future with respect to property tax assessment.

**Mr. Hudak:** The minister may find it hilarious but taxpayers certainly don't find skyrocketing property assessments hilarious. In fact, under the Dalton McGuinty government they've gone up an average of 30%. In fact some taxpayers, whether in Windsor, Fort Erie or Kenora, have seen theirs skyrocket in the triple-digit figures.

I think the minister well knows that property assessors are about to hit the field with a new round of property assessment increases under the McGuinty government. If the minister does not come up with some plan—the member beside him, Mike Colle, has a secret report you've never tabled. We have the Homestead Act before the Legislature. You actually cancelled property assessment averaging. So I say to the minister, are you going to

let the property assessors go out in the field for a new round of assessments or are you actually going to come up with some kind of answer?

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** The one thing we're going to do is fix the mess that that member and his colleagues left the government of Ontario. Mr. Colle's report was an excellent piece of work. It resulted in changes. It's resulted in a number of changes to a range of issues, including maple syrup operations, trailer parks and horse farmers. So none of this is secret. There's no conspiracy here.

Property taxpayers in Ontario can count on the McGuinty Liberals to deal with the challenges created by that member and his government with MPAC and with respect to how we conduct assessments. One thing we can say to those taxpayers is that we are going to get it right when we fix the problems created by the previous government. The people of Ontario deserve better than they got from that member. They're getting it from this government. We're fixing the MPAC system. We're working with them to ensure that all the people of Ontario are treated fairly and that their property tax assessments reflect current value assessment.

### AMBULANCE SERVICE

**Mr. Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre):** To the Minister of Health: Jack Ammendolia has advanced multiple sclerosis—a 47-year-old Welland man who is so sick that he can't move without help. When he does become ill, he needs to go to the hospital by ambulance to get the medically necessary treatment that's available there. On May 11, Mr. Ammendolia was troubled to learn that his ambulance service is being cut off unless he starts forking over \$208 per trip to the private patient transporter. Can you explain why this would happen and what we can do to make sure that Mr. Ammendolia gets the care he needs?

**Hon. George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** I must say to the honourable member that I appreciate the question. The circumstances are not familiar to me and I cannot explain them. I'm very keen to get the information from the honourable member so that I can make an inquiry. If the gentleman is—well, I can't explain it away. I'd be very interested in working alongside the honourable member to try and address these circumstances.

The underlying issue in Ontario with respect to ambulance co-pays, which have been longstanding, is that we have not adjusted those at all, and they are not the same as the figure that was quoted. So yes, I would benefit from additional information and endeavour to work with the honourable member to be of assistance to his constituent.

**Mr. Kormos:** It's an important issue, and my concern is not only for Mr. Ammendolia but for other people who might be in a similar position. Either he pays this money out of pocket, as explained to him, or he doesn't get the health care he needs, because his family can't help. He's got a catheter. It's impossible for them to transport him



safely. And \$208 is simply too much for someone with advanced MS and on a disability pension.

I again ask you to commit to inquiring into this matter and assisting in the resolution of it.

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** Obviously, I made the commitment already. On behalf of that gentleman and others who could be possibly affected by a similar interpretation of policy, I will endeavour to work with the honourable member to get to the bottom of it for the benefit of his constituents.

### HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT

**Mr. Jean-Marc Lalonde (Glengarry–Prescott–Russell):** My question is for the Minister of Transportation. Last Tuesday, just getting off the plane in Ottawa, I caught the CFRA midnight news and I couldn't believe what I was hearing, especially coming from a former Minister of Transportation and an engineer, saying that the McGuinty government was being blamed for the delay in the widening of Highway 7 from Carleton Place to the 417. The member for Lanark said that our government should have acted sooner on this project since his former government, the Conservatives, made an announcement about the widening in 2003.

As we know, expansion of a highway is a major project. It does involve an environmental assessment, purchasing of land, design and engineering, and also consultation. Can you please explain what our government has done since the 2003 announcement to get where we are today? And also, Minister, make sure that the Lanark–Carleton member gets the message so he could go back on CFRA and inform the people properly.

1520

**Hon. Harinder S. Takhar (Minister of Transportation):** I want to thank the member from Glengarry–Prescott–Russell for his question, and I also want to thank my PA, who is from Lanark–Carleton, because he informed me about the issue as well. I want to assure the House that we are moving ahead with the widening of Highway 7 from Highway 417 to Carleton Place. What happened on this project was that we actually got two bump-up requests for the environment process, so the environment minister approved those bump-up requests in 2004. Now we are moving ahead with that project. My colleague, Minister Watson, actually announced that widening project last year. It's a \$100-million project, and we are doing it in three stages. The first stage is about \$38 million and, actually, the construction is going on right now. The detailed design is under way for the remaining phases.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Joseph N. Tascona):** Supplementary? The Chair recognizes the member from Oakville.

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn (Oakville):** I, too, have a question for the Minister of Transportation. On Tuesday, I had the great pleasure of joining you in my hometown of Oakville at the official launch of this year's highway construction season. As you know, the bridges and the

ramps at Bronte Creek and 16 Mile Creek are notorious for causing congestion along the QEW. I've heard from a number of constituents in Oakville, and they're extremely pleased with our government's commitment to expanding the QEW through Halton, finally. But they're concerned about the congestion that may be caused by the road work during this summer construction season.

Minister, could you explain to the people of Halton and the people of Oakville what the McGuinty government is doing to expand the highway network through my riding? As well, can you explain what your ministry can do to help mitigate the impact of construction work on commuting traffic?

**Hon. Mr. Takhar:** I want to thank the member from Oakville for his question. I also want to thank him for joining me this week for the announcement. Actually, he told us a couple of stories about the place where we made the announcement, as well. The QEW is being worked on. It's being expanded. We are going through the environmental assessment process right now to see if we can make HOV lanes on the QEW. We are also expanding—a \$63-million investment—the two key bridges on the QEW as well. The work that we want to do on the QEW is to make sure that there is another lane added on both sides so that the traffic congestion can be addressed.

With regard to the question of what we do to avoid congestion or inconvenience to people when we're doing the work: We do the work at nighttime and during off-peak hours. The municipalities are involved with this. We try to do it in stages, so that if one lane is closed, the other lane stays open during work hours. All those things are being done. Most of the construction can only take place during the summer, and that's what we try to do. We have embarked on a major construction project of \$1.4 billion.

### COLLINGWOOD GENERAL AND MARINE HOSPITAL

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Joseph N. Tascona):** The Chair recognizes the member from Simcoe–Grey.

*Applause.*

**Mr. Jim Wilson (Simcoe–Grey):** It always worries me when the government House leader claps for me.

My question is to the Minister of Health. I know the minister is aware of a rather serious situation that's developing at the Collingwood General and Marine Hospital. For the first time in my memory, the hospital issued a release this week indicating to the public and to patients that the emergency room may have to close due to a physician shortage. So I simply ask you, Minister: What are you doing to help the Collingwood General and Marine Hospital in this difficult time?

**Hon. George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** Do you know what? I have to say to the honourable member: You had the chance to do something and you didn't. The reality is that if you had acted on the fact that medical schools were constrained by the NDP instead of sitting on your duffs for four years, there



would be 280 additional doctors, some of them being available to communities just like Collingwood even today. You know very well that it takes a lot longer to produce a doctor than it does a pizza, so maybe you should have thought about the circumstances when you saw that the size of medical schools were constrained. I hate to put it directly to the honourable member, but he had the power and he slept through it, and now Collingwood is paying the price. That's just the simple reality. We're expanding medical schools by 23% in response to the reality, but lost time is something I can't get back. That's on the honourable member's docket.

However, we recognize the challenges in Collingwood. It's a community well known to me. I talked last night to the chief executive officer and to a board member. We're willing to support the hospital in any way we can in order to address this, and we suggested also that, under the auspices of the local health integration network, the hospitals in Simcoe county may be part of the solution by being able to work co-operatively. But the ministry is actively supporting Collingwood General and Marine Hospital in order to address this circumstance.

**Mr. Wilson:** I asked the question in good faith, and the minister's arrogance and bullying does absolutely nothing to help future patients. It does absolutely nothing to attract doctors to this province or to this particular hospital. In fact, that health minister is probably doing more, with his arrogance and his treatment of professionals and his treatment of people in this Legislature, to discourage doctors from coming to this province.

That's a horrible answer from you. I even told you ahead of time that I was going to ask you the question, because it's a serious matter, and you didn't give me any answer or any comfort at all that you're actually doing anything about this crisis.

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** He's given no comfort to the people of his community by failing to act in a leadership way when he had the reins of power and he was the Minister of Health in this province. He doesn't like it. It cuts a little too close to the truth for the honourable member, but it is the reality. We're bringing a community health centre to that community.

On point, I did say in my earlier answer, which the honourable member can see if he chooses to review Hansard, that we're working closely with the hospital—I spoke to the hospital CEO and to a board member last night—and we're also looking to the local health integration network to work together with all the hospitals there to address the underlying circumstances.

The honourable member doesn't like it, but the facts of the matter cannot be detached from the circumstances. This honourable member's inaction as a Minister of Health is a big part of the problem we have with doctor shortages in the province of Ontario. Our government has increased medical school spaces by 23% because we recognize that Collingwood needs to have an emergency room that's operating at all times. I've been there in the middle of the night, I know its importance, and we're

working with Collingwood General and Marine to assist them in this endeavour.

## VISITOR

**Hon. Mike Colle (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration):** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: We have with us today Tony Lupusella, a former member of the Legislature from Davenport.

## PETITIONS

### AUTISM TREATMENT

**Mr. Cameron Jackson (Burlington):** I have several hundred signatures on a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. It says:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas children with autism who have reached the age of six years are no longer being discharged from their preschool autism program; and

"Whereas there are approximately 700 preschool children with autism across Ontario who are required to wait indefinitely for placement in the program, and there are also countless school-age children on the same wait list that are not receiving the support they require in the school system; and

"Whereas these children should be getting the best special education possible in the form of applied behavioural analysis (ABA) within the school system; and

"Whereas this situation has an impact on the families, extended families and friends of all of these children; and

"Whereas, as stated on the website for the Ministry of Children and Youth Services, 'IBI can make a significant difference in the life of a child with autism. Its objective is to decrease the frequency of challenging behaviours, build social skills and promote language development';

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to fund the treatment of IBI for all pre-school children awaiting services and fund a school-based special education program in the form of ABA."

This petition has my signature of support.

### RENT REGULATION

**Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti (Scarborough Southwest):** I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, presented to me by Mr. Sonny Sansone, of 10 Gordonridge, and signed by several others. It reads as follows:

"Whereas the McGuinty government is concerned about tenants in Ontario and wants to have a fair relationship between landlords and tenants; and

"Whereas the cost of living continues to rise, and income of many people, especially pensioners and low-income workers, remains comparatively low; and

"Whereas landlords currently have more rights than tenants, giving them the ability to raise rent fees as they wish, causing tenants to fear rent increases they can't afford;

"We, therefore, the undersigned, petition to cap rents in Ontario, giving more rights to tenants; and

"Further, we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to pass into law the Residential Tenancies Act, Bill 109, as soon as possible."

I agree with this petition. I affix my signature to it and give it to page Gennaro, who is with me here today.

1530

### ORGAN DONATION

**Mr. Norm Miller (Parry Sound-Muskoka):** I have a petition that reads:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas 1,920 Ontarians are currently on a waiting list for an organ transplant; and

"Whereas the number of Ontarians waiting for an organ transplant has virtually doubled since 1994; and

"Whereas hundreds die every year waiting for an organ transplant; and

"Whereas greater public education and awareness will increase the number of people who sign their organ donor cards and increase the availability of organ transplants for Ontarians; and

"Whereas the private member's bill proposed by Oak Ridges MPP Frank Klees will require every resident 16 years of age and older to complete an organ donation question when applying for or renewing a driver's licence or provincial health card, thereby increasing public awareness of the importance of organ donation while respecting the right of every person to make a personal decision regarding the important issue of organ donation;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to pass Bill 67, the Organ and Tissue Donation Mandatory Declaration Act, 2006."

I support this petition.

### LONG-TERM CARE

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Joseph N. Tascona):** The Chair recognizes the member for Oshawa.

**Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette (Oshawa):** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Ouellette:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas long-term-care funding levels are too low to enable homes to provide the care and services our aging seniors and parents"—

**Mr. Tony Ruprecht (Davenport):** Mr. Speaker, on a point of order.

**The Acting Speaker:** What is the point of order in petitions?

**Mr. Ruprecht:** Mr. Speaker, I'm shouting here for the fourth time on a point of order. You know the rules, Mr.

Speaker, and you cannot be biased. It starts with the Conservative Party, then it goes to the NDP and then it goes to the Liberals—

**The Acting Speaker:** That's not a point of order. Take your seat now or you'll be removed from this chamber.

The member from Oshawa.

**Mr. Ouellette:** I'll start over.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas long-term-care funding levels are too low to enable homes to provide the care and services our aging seniors and parents who are residents of long-term-care homes need, with the respect and dignity that they deserve; and

"Whereas, even with recent funding increases and a dedicated staff who do more than their best, there is still not enough time available to provide the care residents need. For example, 10 minutes, and sometimes less, is simply not enough time to assist a resident to get up, dressed, to the bathroom and then to the dining room for breakfast; and

"Whereas those unacceptable care and service levels are now at risk of declining;

"We, the undersigned, who are members of family councils, residents' councils and/or supporters of long-term care in Ontario, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to increase operating funding to long-term-care homes by \$306.6 million, which will allow the hiring of more staff to provide an additional 20 minutes of care per resident per day over the next two years (2006 and 2007)."

I affix my name in support.

**The Acting Speaker:** The Chair recognizes the member from Davenport,

**Mr. Ruprecht:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thought it was fairly clear that petitions are done on a rotating basis, and consequently—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker:** If you want to read your petition, fine. I didn't see you.

**Mr. Ruprecht:** I challenge the Chair on this issue.

**The Acting Speaker:** You can't challenge the Chair. If you want to read a petition, do so. I didn't see you.

**Mr. Ruprecht:** Mr. Speaker, can you tell me, when can I challenge the Chair on this, then?

**The Acting Speaker:** You can't.

Are there other petitions? The Chair recognizes the member from Whitby-Ajax.

**Mrs. Christine Elliott (Whitby-Ajax):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario from Ballycliffe Lodge.

"Whereas long-term-care funding levels are too low to enable homes to provide the care and services our aging seniors and parents who are residents of long-term-care homes need, with the respect and dignity that they deserve; and

"Whereas, even with recent funding increases and a dedicated staff who do more than their best, there is still not enough time available to provide the care residents



need. For example, 10 minutes, and sometimes less, is simply not enough time to assist a resident to get up, dressed, to the bathroom and then to the dining room for breakfast; and

"Whereas those unacceptable care and service levels are now at risk of declining;

"We, the undersigned, who are members of family councils, residents' councils and/or supporters of long-term care in Ontario, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to increase operating funding to long-term-care homes by \$306.6 million, which will allow the hiring of more staff to provide an additional 20 minutes of care per resident per day over the next two years (2006 and 2007)."

As I'm in support of this petition, I'm pleased to affix my signature.

### CHILD CARE

**Mr. Tony Ruprecht (Davenport):** I have a petition addressed to the assembly of Ontario. It reads as follows:

"Whereas the people of Ontario expect the government of Canada to honour existing agreements with the government of Ontario;

"Whereas provinces and territories negotiated agreements with the federal government to ensure Canadians would have access to early learning and child care programs that are high-quality, affordable, universally inclusive and developmental;

"Whereas parents in Ontario have demonstrated a high demand for greater access to high-quality early learning and child care programs;

"Whereas Ontario's early learning and child care agreement with the government of Canada would provide Ontario families with at least 25,000 new high-quality, regulated child care spaces in the first three years;

"Whereas Ontario's early learning and child care agreement represents a \$1.9-billion investment over five years in high-quality early learning and child care;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to support the government of Ontario in calling on the government of Canada to honour Ontario's early learning and child care agreement, for the sake of the thousands of Ontario families who would benefit from it."

Since I agree, I'm delighted to sign this petition.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Joseph N. Tascona):** That was wonderful; thank you.

### NATIVE LAND DISPUTE

**Ms. Laurie Scott (Haliburton-Victoria-Brock):** "We Demand Leadership in Land Dispute

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the McGuinty government was notified of this land issue over a year ago; and

"Whereas the standoff has been ongoing since February 28, 2006; and

"Whereas there has been no leadership from senior levels of government;

"We, the undersigned, demand that the McGuinty Liberals start showing some real, consistent and timely leadership in dealing with the current standoff in Caledonia."

### IDENTITY THEFT

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Joseph N. Tascona):** The Chair once again recognizes the member from Davenport.

**Mr. Tony Ruprecht (Davenport):** Once again, Mr. Speaker, thank you very much for recognizing me the second time. I appreciate that. I have a petition to the Parliament of Ontario and the Minister of Government Services. It reads as follows:

"Whereas identity theft is the fastest-growing crime in North America;

"Whereas confidential and private information is being stolen on a regular basis, affecting literally thousands of people;

"Whereas the cost of this crime exceeds billions of dollars;

"Whereas countless hours are wasted to restore one's good credit rating;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, demand that Bill 38, which passed unanimously on November 30, 2005, be brought before committee and that the following issues be included for consideration and debate:

"(1) All consumer reports should be provided in a truncated (masked-out) form, protecting our vital private information, such as SIN and loan account numbers.

"(2) Should a consumer reporting agency discover that there has been an unlawful disclosure of consumer information, the agency should immediately inform the affected consumer.

"(3) The consumer reporting agency shall only report credit-inquiry records resulting from actual applications for credit or increase of credit, except in a report given to the consumer.

"(4) The consumer reporting agency shall investigate disputed information within 30 days and correct, supplement or automatically delete any information found unconfirmed, incomplete or inaccurate."

I'm delighted to sign this petition, since I agree with it 100%.

### LESLIE M. FROST CENTRE

**Ms. Laurie Scott (Haliburton-Victoria-Brock):** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the McGuinty government announced the closure of the Leslie M. Frost Natural Resources Centre in July 2004 with no public consultation; and

"Whereas public outrage over the closure of the Frost Centre caused the government to appoint a working committee of local residents to examine options for the future of the property; and

"Whereas the working committee has completed their consultations and has prepared recommendations for the provincial government that include a procedure to follow during the request for proposals process; and

"Whereas the Frost Centre has been an important educational resource for the community, and continued use of the facility for educational purposes has widespread support;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario as follows:

"The Dalton McGuinty Liberals should retain public ownership of the Frost Centre lands and follow the recommendations of the working committee regarding the request for proposals process."

I'm going to hand this to page Connor.

1540

### GO TRANSIT TUNNEL

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Joseph N. Tascona):** The Chair again recognizes the member from Davenport.

**Mr. Tony Ruprecht (Davenport):** Mr. Speaker, this must be a great day, and I thank you for recognizing me the third time today. That's wonderful.

I have a petition which reads as follows:

"To the Parliament of Ontario, the minister of infrastructure services and the Minister of Transportation:

"Whereas GO Transit is presently planning to tunnel an area just south of St. Clair Avenue West and west of Old Weston Road, making it easier for GO trains to pass a major rail crossing;

"Whereas TTC is presently planning a TTC right-of-way along all of St. Clair Avenue West, including the bottleneck caused by the dilapidated St. Clair Avenue-Old Weston Road bridge;

"Whereas this bridge (underpass) will be: (1) too narrow for the planned TTC right-of-way, since it will leave only one lane for traffic; (2) it is not safe for pedestrians (it's about 50 metres long). It's dark and slopes on both east and west sides creating high banks for 300 metres; and (3) it creates a divide, a no man's land, between Old Weston Road and Keele Street. (This was acceptable when the area consisted entirely of slaughterhouses, but now the area has 900 new homes);

"Therefore we, the undersigned, demand that GO Transit extend the tunnel beyond St. Clair Avenue West so that trains will pass under St. Clair Avenue West, thus eliminating this eyesore of a bridge with its high banks and blank walls. Instead it will create a dynamic, revitalized community enhanced by a beautiful continuous cityscape with easy traffic flow."

Who could possibly disagree with this petition?

### LONG-TERM CARE

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Joseph N. Tascona):** Further petitions. The Chair recognizes the member from Haliburton-Victoria-Brock.

**Ms. Laurie Scott (Haliburton-Victoria-Brock):** I'm in a contest with the member from Davenport.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas long-term-care funding levels are too low to enable homes to provide the care and services our aging seniors and parents who are residents of long-term-care homes need, with the respect and dignity that they deserve; and

"Whereas, even with recent funding increases and a dedicated staff who do more than their best, there is still not enough time available to provide the care residents need. For example, 10 minutes, and sometimes less, is simply not enough time to assist a resident to get up, dressed, to the bathroom and then to the dining room for breakfast; and

"Whereas those unacceptable care and service levels are now at risk of declining;

"We, the undersigned, who are members of family councils, residents' councils and/or supporters of long-term care in Ontario, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to increase operating funding to long-term-care homes by \$306.6 million, which will allow the hiring of more staff to provide an additional 20 minutes of care per resident per day over the next two years (2006 and 2007)."

This was brought to me by many long-term-care residents in the riding of Haliburton-Victoria-Brock.

**The Acting Speaker:** The time for petitions is over. The Chair recognizes the deputy House leader.

### BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

**Hon. David Caplan (Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal, Deputy Government House Leader):** Before I get to the orders of the day, I'd like to rise, pursuant to standing order 55, and give the Legislature the business of the House for next week. Well, it's actually two weeks, but—

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh (Halton):** There is none next week.

**Hon. Mr. Caplan:** I'm reminded by the member from Halton that there is none next week. He's very sharp.

On Monday, May 29, in the afternoon, to be confirmed; in the evening, third reading of Bill 78, the Education Statute Law Amendment Act (Student Performance), 2006.

On Tuesday, May 30, in the afternoon, second reading of Bill 107, the Human Rights Code Amendment Act.

On Wednesday, May 31, in the afternoon, an opposition day standing in the name of Mr. Hampton; in the evening, to be confirmed.

On Thursday, June 1, 2006, in the afternoon, second reading of Bill 52, the Education Statute Law Amendment Act (Learning to Age 18).



**ORDERS OF THE DAY****SECURITIES TRANSFER ACT, 2006****LOI DE 2006 SUR LE TRANSFERT  
DES VALEURS MOBILIÈRES**

Mr. Phillips moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 41, An Act to create a comprehensive system of rules for the transfer of securities that is consistent with such rules across North America and to make consequential amendments to various Acts / *Projet de loi 41, Loi instituant un régime global de règles régissant le transfert des valeurs mobilières qui cadre avec celui qui s'applique dans ce domaine en Amérique du Nord et apportant des modifications corrélatives à diverses lois.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Joseph N. Tascona):** The Chair recognizes the Minister of Government Services.

**Hon. Gerry Phillips (Minister of Government Services):** I'm pleased to begin third reading debate on Bill 41. I want to begin by thanking all members of the Legislature who have participated in the development of this bill. I want to particularly thank the committee who dealt with it, I thought expeditiously and with a good amount of attention.

This is a complex but very important bill. It's part of a broader series of things that the Legislature has directed us to do. Some people would say, "Why is the capital market important to me? Why are the stock markets important to me?" Well, for a couple of reasons. One is that virtually everyone now is an investor in the market. If you are into CPP, the Canada pension plan, your RRSP or almost any pension plan, then you personally are investing in the capital markets. The protection of investors is extremely important. That is, if any of us are invested in the market, we want to be certain that we have good protection for our investments. So this issue is extremely important to all of us.

By way of background, I think the members of the Legislature will recall that we, the Legislature, require what's called a five-year review of our Securities Act by legislation. That was conducted by someone named Purdy Crawford with a panel of people. They made their report to the Legislature. Then, as you will recall, an all-party legislative committee reviewed those recommendations and reported. I might say that all three parties unanimously supported the recommendations of the committee. For the public, sometimes you see the conflict that exists around here, but often, as we do our work, when it's in the interest of the public for all parties to support it, you'll see that. In this case there was unanimous support for the recommendations.

There was a series of recommendations in the report, and the third recommendation was for the government to proceed with the Securities Transfer Act. What the committee said was:

"Those witnesses who addressed this issue"—that is, the Securities Transfer Act—"were unanimous in their support for the Crawford report recommendation. They

made a compelling case that Ontario law in this area has fallen behind the US and European jurisdictions and needs to be modernized.

"The standing committee sees this as an opportunity for Ontario, not only to improve the investment environment for Ontario investors, but also to play a leading role in establishing uniform legislation across Canada."

So their all-party recommendation to the Legislature was that the government should introduce securities transfer legislation modelled on revised article 8 of the Uniform Commercial Code in the US.

That's what we have done. In some respects under the direction of an all-party committee, we have introduced this legislation that accomplishes those two things. One is to provide a contemporary securities transfer, but the other is to provide leadership to the other jurisdictions in the country. I'm pleased to say, by the way, that Alberta now has passed second reading of essentially this bill, and other jurisdictions are now in the process of proceeding with it. We've done what the committee recommended we do.

If I can provide a layperson's explanation of the bill, because it is relatively complex, the current laws around security transfers assume a paper-based environment; that is, when you buy a stock, you will get that stock delivered to you and you will hold that stock. As everyone appreciates, that no longer exists; that simply would bog down the marketplace. We would become competitively disadvantaged, the investors would not have a good environment to invest in and we'd find that investors would be looking elsewhere.

What has happened is that the market has found ways to trade electronically, but it has been cumbersome and expensive. What this act does is it brings us up to date. It recognizes the reality of electronic transfers and updates our laws so that we can conduct business much more efficiently.

Why is that in our interests? It's in all of our interests because we rely on a good level of income in our retirement, for example; our businesses looking to raise capital have to do that in a competitive environment if we want our businesses to compete globally.

**1550**

I think all of us appreciate that we are in a global trading economy. As a matter of fact, I often say to my community that nobody in the world relies on exports like Ontario does; nobody has a higher percentage of their gross domestic product in international exports than Ontario does. We are very much a successful global trading environment, and certainly our financial institutions are, but we've got to make sure we keep our laws and regulations up to date. That's what this act does.

I am told by those who have analysed the need for this that the potential savings for our capital markets and our investor community is between \$100 million and \$140 million a year. Those are Canada-wide annual savings, but they're significant. If you believe, as I do, that ultimately the investor benefits from that, that that can be a return to investors rather than a cost, this is significant.



It's also significant in terms of continuing to implement the recommendations that were laid out for us by the standing committee.

I would acknowledge that we have two or three more pieces of work from the committee. My colleagues Mr. Tascona and Mr. Prue both have often pointed that out, that we still need to deal with, and we are working very hard on, finding a way to move to a common securities regulator. And as we said, as we're working on that, we continue to look at finding a way to deal with the separation of the adjudicative function from the regulatory function at the securities commission. But the fact that we haven't dealt with those two should not stop us from continuing to pick off the recommendations one at a time.

By the way, just to remind ourselves, because I don't think this Legislature has taken as much credit as it should, we did two other things that maybe Mr. Kormos isn't even quite aware of. In the budget, we provided the Legislature with the tools to review the Ontario Securities Commission, to refer it to a committee. The second thing we did was pass what's called civil liability for secondary markets, now available as of the end of December 2005. It is quite an important protection for investors. We're the first jurisdiction in Canada to offer that. It means that for stocks that are traded after the initial offering, that regime is now available.

I'm about to wrap up my remarks by saying that I appreciate the work in the Legislature by all parties in this area of modernizing our environment for investors and for securities. The committee made those recommendations to the Legislature, and we are systematically moving through those. This is one of the big ones. Finally, I'd say that this is also the first phase of three phases in dealing with updating our commercial laws. We will be proceeding with the next phase over the next few months and the third phase over the next perhaps year and a half.

I look forward to the debate here. As I say, it's a complex bill, but in some respects simple in that it essentially updates the way our markets can trade, moving from a paper-based trading environment to an electronic environment, with significant cost savings as a result, which I believe the investor ultimately will benefit from. It fulfills one of the key recommendations that came out of that all-party committee, calling for us to move forward on this legislation.

With that, I look forward to the debate this afternoon.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette):** Questions and comments? Further debate?

**Mr. Joseph N. Tascona (Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford):** I'm certainly pleased to join in the debate. I think the Minister of Government Services has correctly stated that this is a useful piece of legislation for the transfer of securities, no doubt, not only in Ontario but throughout this country and the United States. It's essentially parallel to what the legislation is in the United States.

During the hearings we did have on this bill, it was quite interesting in terms of the amendments. I was a

little disappointed that the amendments came in when they did and that the minister didn't make me aware of those. But there were a lot of amendments, and I think it came out of the legislation that's coming through in Alberta to sort of tighten up the language. I think they did a good job with respect to doing that, with respect to the language in the bill, to make it much more consistent. The last thing you need, even though it's legislation that is similar or even almost identical in terms of purpose, is to have different types of language in terms of the interpretation. It can lead to a lot of problems, especially in a country that has different jurisdictions and a final court of appeal, in terms of the Supreme Court of Canada dealing with this. From what I understand from ministry staff, this is not a piece of legislation that's been subject to a lot of litigation, which is also a positive aspect of the bill.

Bearing in mind that it is a fairly complicated piece of legislation in terms of drafting, the purpose is essentially to change it from a paper-based to an electronic-based system with respect to security transfer.

The minister is correct: We've had concerns with respect to bringing the Ontario Securities Commission into the modern age with respect to how it operates—the member from Niagara Centre—to deal with the Enrons and to deal with the different types of corporate methods that have taken advantage of shareholders, taken advantage of employees with respect to their pension plans—measures that have to be taken seriously in this country because they have been taken seriously across the border with respect to a very vigilant and aggressive, prosecution-based effort that is totally separated from the regulation arm of the securities commission in the United States separating those two functions, the regulation of the industry as opposed to the prosecution of the people who decide to break the laws.

I think there's a fundamental change that we need to see in this country. There are some real problems with respect to some of the activities that have occurred with respect to not only pension plans but also dealing with stock options and taking some much-needed funds equity out of the company to a small number of individuals.

I think it's clear that with this particular bill we're moving forward in that direction. Certainly the minister is correct. I raised it in the hearings with respect to reform. I think we do need reform in the Ontario Business Corporations Act to bring it more in line in terms of how one should operate.

If you read the Ontario Gazette, you almost wonder why people even incorporate. You go through the Ontario Gazette and you'll have pages upon pages, volumes upon volumes of companies that have been set up which never do anything, and because of the laws of this province, they're dissolved because there's nothing that has happened. You've got to wonder why people are doing these things with respect to setting up what we call dummy corporations and doing nothing with that particular corporate vehicle.



It sort of begs the question of how we operate in this province with respect to corporate entities and how people use the corporate entity in a fashion that they don't realize, that it's not their personal piggy bank. There are some bylaws, there are some rules that they have to respect because, even though they are the majority shareholder, there are some rules that have to be followed. That just doesn't seem to be in place in this province in terms of how that is occurring. We need to bring in a better method of enforcement under the Ontario Business Corporations Act because that's a part of where we're going to go with respect to dealing with officers, directors and shareholders of the corporation to bring it into the modern age.

1600

It's quite obvious, because people used to incorporate because they felt that they would be immune from legal action and you wouldn't be able to go after their personal assets when you're dealing with a corporate entity. But that corporate veil has been pierced in so many different ways because of corporate malfeasance, corporate fraud against individuals trying to use that corporation against other individuals. I think the changes are necessary, combined with respect to security that you want to see under the Personal Property Security Act. We need to deal with that also to bring it into not only real-time, but also to deal with the type of assets that are out there in the different financing arrangements and leasing arrangements. You really need to have some kind of security for the individual that is taking the risk in lending and also for the individual who is purchasing that particular personal property.

I really don't have much to add to this particular bill. We're not sitting next week and I'll be very active in my riding. There are a number of issues that I'm dealing with, like GO Transit. I talked to the Minister of Transportation today about GO Transit in terms of meeting with his people to deal with that particular issue, and also about bringing in a passport office to the city of Barrie to deal with the issues surrounding closer-to-home access to that particular passport option for our area.

That's all I want to say. I've been very pleased to work with the minister. He's been very professional, as has his staff, in dealing with this particular bill. I look forward to his next bill, whenever that may come.

**The Acting Speaker:** Questions and comments? Seeing none, further debate?

**Mr. Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre):** I'm pleased to speak to Bill 41 on behalf of the New Democrats here at Queen's Park. Our critic in this area, Michael Prue, was eager to have worked on the committee with other members of this Legislature in that five-year review process that the minister speaks of and that resulted in this small step forward, Bill 41, which we support. I expect that it'll go to a vote today so that it can then be, in due course, in this case, reasonably promptly proclaimed into law.

As I say, it's a step in the right direction. Everybody acknowledges and everybody agrees; we're of one voice when we speak for the need for yet more important

recommendations from the securities review committee that are still to be implemented. These include—and the minister has made reference to some of them—the need to separate the adjudicative function of the Ontario Securities Commission from its other functions; the need for a task force to review the role of self-regulatory organizations, including whether the trade association and regulatory functions of SRO, self-regulating organizations, should be separate; and the need to work with the securities commission to establish a workable mechanism that would allow investors to pursue restitution in a timely and affordable manner and that the government report on its progress with respect to this work within a fixed time frame. I'm going to speak further about that in a few minutes.

The minister, of course, talked about people owning stocks of one sort or another. While he's right that many people do, let's be fair and understand that the poorest folks in Ontario don't. The concept of owning a stock is pretty foreign to most of them. But most middle-class people, middle-class income earners, certainly members of this Legislative Assembly, own equities. Rich folks own equities. If they don't own them, they steal them, and I'm going to talk about that in a few minutes as well.

For instance, I recall the historic moment in this Legislature—because I know that most of the members own stocks directly or indirectly because of the nature of the MPP's defined contribution pension plan. I remember the day we voted on it here in the Legislative Assembly. It was an historic moment because of course that was back in, what, 1996, long before defined benefit pension plans began collapsing throughout the world. It was the leadership of Premier Mike Harris—Mr. Berardinetti might be interested to know this history and to understand why he's now a member of a defined contribution pension plan. You'll remember it, too, Speaker, I'm sure, with great pride, as you voted with your caucus to abolish the defined benefit pension plan that MPPs had. You were leading-edge. This was vanguard. This was leading-edge stuff.

Here it is 10 years later, and we're seeing the corporate world collapse defined benefit pension plans left and right and replace them with these innovative, clever—they were, Mr. Berardinetti. You should have heard the speech-making that took place here in this chamber in 1996, this leading-edge sort of financial philosophy, defined contribution pension plan, which is what MPPs belong to now and which is what increasing numbers of workers are forced to belong to because their employers are simply pulling their defined benefit pension plan.

I just saw in the United States a couple of months ago Verizon, the telecommunications company, announcing that they were going to collapse—not collapse, terminate, no more contributions. Of course, you have to give notice, so it was within a year or two years—all contributions to the defined benefit plan.

I remember the minister himself was here. I'm sure he was, because he was a member of the Legislative Assembly. We all voted for the defined contribution pen-



sion plan. I, quite frankly, remain proud of how I voted on that day 10 years ago, of the innovativeness of all of us. We were so clever, weren't we, Minister? The innovativeness of all of us in simply dismantling—I had a private member's bill. I recall this. I had a private member's bill that did but this to the historic defined benefit pension plan. It made it necessary to be at least the age of 55 before you could begin to collect. I thought that was a most modest proposal; I did. But nobody seemed to latch on to that proposal. People weren't about to jump on that bandwagon, because the criticism, of course, was the perception—and it was a real one—that people as young as—who was the fellow from out Windsor way? Remo Mancini. Remo Mancini was collecting an MPP's pension at a relatively tender age. He was probably no older than Mr. Berardinetti is now. Every time I mention that, Mr. Mancini's office calls mine and says, "Why do you keep doing that to me? Why do you keep telling people about that?" I say, "Well, because it's a historical fact. Of course, if I'm not telling the truth, say so and correct me." So Mr. Remo Mancini's office keeps calling mine every time I raise his name in the Legislature as an illustration of what drew public attention to those defined benefit pension plans, which were, of course, replaced so cleverly by defined contribution pension plans.

So I say to Mr. Berardinetti, the member for Scarborough Southwest, who is joining the minister as a seat-mate for the purpose of this debate, that's why you have a defined contribution pension plan. That's why you own stock. Now, mind you, the last week hasn't been particularly kind to you, but you've got a lot of time. You have a whole lot of time.

When I learned that I was going to be speaking to this bill, I thought about the important role that the Ontario Securities Commission has, and reference has been made to it, and that is: to protect investors from outright thievery. I recall the line from the song by Woody Guthrie: "Some will rob you with a six-gun, and some with a fountain pen." That's from the song *Pretty Boy Floyd*. He probably wrote that back in the 1930s or 1940s. "Some will rob you with a six-gun, and some with a fountain pen."

Of course, in the context of securities—John Roth is from Nortel. Remember him? John Roth, CEO of Nortel, who in 2001 had a base salary of \$1,250,000 a year, climbed to \$1,500,000 a year midway through 2001. He retired as Nortel's president and CEO on November 1, 2001, and since then, he had been on a year-long leave of absence, during which he drew his entire salary. In 2000, he earned \$6.7 million in cash: \$1,104,000 and change in base salary, a bonus of \$5.6 million, and miscellaneous pocket change of \$33,199. He became the president and CEO of Nortel in 1997. While he was president, he got rewarded. John Roth got rewarded. John Roth just laughed all the way to the bank, with those huge salaries and bonuses, because it was during his tenure in the role of CEO and president of Nortel that the stock dropped from 105 bucks a share to \$6 a share. It's even lower

now. I know that some people were buying Nortel at 50 bucks on the way down because brokers were still peddling it. He reduced—and this is just by the time he retired; of course it's much lower now—the number of workers from 72,800 people to 52,600 by the time he retired. He took away people's jobs. Some men rob you with a six-gun, some with a fountain pen.

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I'm convinced there are other jurisdictions in the world where Roth would be in jail right now. He stripped that company bare. He destroyed families. People lost their homes, their livelihoods, their careers. Roth persistently misstated the state of affairs in that company, which of course bumped up the value of the stock and, again, was one of the factors that brokers were still peddling it to senior citizens when it was at 50 bucks, on the way down from its peak of \$105. And they were—I've got constituents. Because Roth was such a con. He was talking to the brokers and he was misstating the state of affairs for Nortel.

Meanwhile, of course, guys like him profit because they sell high. Martha Stewart—she's small fry. She's nothing. Yet she did time. What's going on here? How come a guy like Roth has pocketed millions while other people's lives are destroyed? You know that Woody Guthrie song, *Pretty Boy Floyd*? I heard him sing it on records. I never heard him sing it because, of course, he died, I think, in 1967. But I heard Ramblin' Jack Elliott sing it lots of times. The first time would be around 1968-69 at the Riverboat on Yorkville Avenue here.

When I was thinking about John Roth, and how much money he stole from working women and men, how many jobs he took away, how many homes he took away, as I say, I felt compelled, and I continue to feel compelled to read the lyrics of Woody Guthrie's great song, *Pretty Boy Floyd*, into Hansard. It's behooven that we do that now. The song is a great song. If you have a chance to pick it up on a Guthrie album, do, but as I say, Ramblin' Jack Elliott still does it as he travels around. Others, of course, have done it. It's a great story:

If you'll gather 'round me, children,  
A story I will tell  
'Bout *Pretty Boy Floyd*, an outlaw,  
Oklahoma knew him well.

It was in the town of Shawnee,  
A Saturday afternoon,  
His wife beside him in his wagon  
As into town they rode.

There a deputy sheriff approached him  
In a manner rather rude,  
Vulgar words of anger,  
An' his wife she overheard.

*Pretty Boy* grabbed a log chain,  
And the deputy grabbed his gun;  
In the fight that followed  
He laid that deputy down.



Then he took to the trees and timber  
To live a life of shame;  
Every crime in Oklahoma  
Was added to his name.

But a many a starving farmer  
The same old story told  
How the outlaw paid their mortgage  
And saved their little homes.

Others tell you 'bout a stranger  
That come to beg a meal,  
Underneath his napkin  
Left a thousand dollar bill.

It was in Oklahoma City,  
It was on a Christmas Day,  
There was a whole car load of groceries  
Come with a note to say:

Well, you say that I'm an outlaw,  
You say that I'm a thief.  
Here's a Christmas dinner  
For the families on relief.

Yes, as through this world I've wandered  
I've seen lots of funny men;  
Some will rob you with a six-gun,  
And some with a fountain pen.

And as through your life you travel,  
Yes, as through your life you roam,  
You won't never see an outlaw  
Drive a family from their home.

It's a great song, isn't it? Great story. It dates back to the dust bowl days, to the Depression in Oklahoma. But the problem is there are still the John Roths robbing people with fountain pens in the year 2006, just like song-writer-singers like Woody Guthrie were singing and writing and telling folks about in 1936. That's what the securities legislation should be designed to protect.

As a matter of fact, Woody Guthrie was born in Okemah, Oklahoma. A couple of summers ago, I was driving through Okemah, Oklahoma, and you can actually—it's not preserved because it's all grown over, but the homestead of his family from around 1912 or so is there. Of course, you've got to be a real fan, Mr. Berardinetti, to climb through the brush and find the foundation of the old Guthrie homestead.

It's remarkable how little has changed in 70 or 80 years from when Woody Guthrie wrote and sang that song until today. John Roth took many a person's home away from him with his manipulation, his distortion and his outright thievery. "Some will rob you with a six-gun, and some with a fountain pen."

Conrad Moffat Black: There's a guy who should be sitting on a bunk in a jail cell and who may well be, in due course, because of the charges laid against him in the

United States. "Tubby" Black, huh? You remember what was said about him with respect to Hollinger, the public holding company controlled by him—not owned by him, controlled by him. Conrad Black was treating that company as his own personal piggy bank. Barbara Amiel was walking around with the Prada bags and the Versace stuff from down on Fifth Avenue in New York City, the Bentley and Rolls-Royce limousines, paid for with money stolen by Black from Hollinger, with all the Prada and Versace and Louis Vuitton, I'm sure. Price was no object. Somebody just told me that Conrad Moffat Black, a thief if there ever was one, was brazen enough, bold enough to be at some Bill Clinton fundraiser event/black-tie dinner down in New York City.

Conrad Black has such disdain for Canada. He relinquished his Canadian citizenship, as you know, because—oh, the things he had to say about Canada. Mind you, that was after he stole the pension funds from Dominion Stores, huh, and the raid he did on Massey Ferguson—was it Massey Ferguson, Speaker?

With a fountain pen, Conrad Black took away more homes, more people's pensions and more people's futures than any outlaw ever did with a six-gun. It's a 70-year-old song, maybe 80 years old, but still, the Pretty Boy Floyd lyrics are as telling today as they were back then, aren't they?

Conrad Black: His arrogance about Canada and his disdain for Canada were just tremendous. He regards Canada with disgust, and in fact relinquished his Canadian citizenship, which is going to put him, because he's up on Bridle Path turf—I don't want to disappoint and upset his neighbours, but yes, you've got a thief living next door. He's up on Bridle Path turf. The problem is, he's charged now and awaiting trial, but if he gets convicted, he's no longer a Canadian citizen and our border security should, and I hope will, be stopping him should he try to get back to that palatial mansion on the Bridle Path, saying, "Conrad Black, we don't allow criminals, jailbirds, into this country."

Boy, do I ever wish he could serve his time at Millhaven. I know some inmates there who would just love to see Conrad Black in the lineup of new inmates checking in, being measured for their jumpsuits. There might even be a couple of them whose mothers or grandmothers had their pensions stolen when he raided the pension fund at Dominion Stores. Think about that, Mr. Berardinetti. That's called "doing hard time."

*Laughter.*

**Mr. Kormos:** You think it's funny, huh? Mr. Black won't be laughing; he'll be crying big crocodile tears.

These are the robber barons of this century. Conrad Black described his Canadian citizenship as an "impediment to my progress in another, more amenable jurisdiction." Wow. He talked about dismantling medicare. His lieutenant and closest confidante, David Radler, has already pleaded guilty to charges of mail fraud in the United States, and apparently is expected to testify—he's ratted out on Black. His British peerage, which was thwarted by the Canadian government, was so important



to him that he relinquished his Canadian citizenship—a thoroughly despicable guy.

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If we ever get around to prosecuting Roth, Roth and Black could share a jail cell. What do you think, Speaker? They could take turns sweeping up and mopping up, and they could share the upper bunk and the lower bunk. “No, Conrad, you take the upper bunk tonight. I’ll take the lower bunk,” John Roth says. But it shouldn’t just be short terms; it should be lengthy, substantial terms that these people should be sentenced to.

“Black and Radler abused their control of a public company and treated it as their personal piggy bank,” SEC enforcement director Stephen Cutler said in an SEC statement.”

Of course, you see, the SEC is the American regulatory body that appears to have some far more stringent standards. Look at the guys Lay et al from Enron. Now, a couple of them may be able to buy their way into the country club prisons, the Martha Stewart resort prisons, but maybe if the American people are lucky, a couple might just end up in Attica, although part of me says that’s highly unlikely, because just like poor people don’t own stock, rich people who do time don’t end up in Attica. I’ve never been inside Attica. Have you ever been past it, Speaker, driving through New York state? It’s a pretty mean, tough place.

I think, quite frankly, a prisoner exchange, should Conrad Black end up doing some time—they should do a multicultural experience, a multi-economic, socio-economic-level experience. Show Conrad Black how the other part of America, the poor people, do time when they get busted and sent to jail, maybe on a drug trafficking charge or on the three-strikes-and-you’re-out type of stuff—some kid who manages to steal a couple of cars and rob a corner store, who’s all cranked up on crack cocaine and what have you, but who suffers from that American three-strikes-and-you’re-out, at 19, 20, 21 years old, because that kid’s poor. He can’t afford all the high-priced lawyers; he can’t afford to buy his way into a country club prison. So we should do a little exchange for Conrad Black with the poor kid. Let Conrad Black do five years in Attica and let the poor kid do three in the country club resort, with all the swindlers and the white-collar thieves. It’s just an idea. I think it might have some beneficial experience; it might even have some rehabilitative quality for Conrad Black. And for the life of me, why Barbara hasn’t been indicted as well is beyond understanding.

I’ve managed to get a Woody Guthrie song on to Hansard; I’ve been wanting to do that for a good chunk of time. I’ve managed to share some of my most intimate feelings about John Roth and Conrad Black with the members of this chamber—not that I haven’t done it before, but it’s been a while since I’ve done it. It was a subject matter that made it entirely relevant and in order, in my view.

Remember Bill 14, coming up in September? It does a modest amendment to the Limitations Act. Unfortun-

ately, it doesn’t address that area of the Limitations Act that really cries out for addressing, and the minister and his committee may well take this into consideration as they’re pursuing further legislation dealing with securities regulation. James Daw, as I recall, is the guy who’s written about it from time to time—at least once, maybe twice. The little investors against whom the Limitations Act operates so punitively so that they can’t litigate to get some of the money back that was stolen from them from guys like Conrad Black or John Roth of Nortel—Bill 14 doesn’t open up that part of the Limitations Act, so of course any amendments to Bill 14 that deal with the issue raised by James Daw on behalf of those investors is not going to be in order, for surely it should be, could be and hopefully will be within the scope of this committee to examine that sort of stuff as well.

Oh, and I wanted to talk about MPPs’ pension plans for a good chunk of time too, and let the newer members understand how proud they should be of their defined contribution pension plan, because their colleagues of all three political parties voted unanimously for it. They did. Every single person in this Legislature of every single political stripe voted for the defined contribution pension plan.

So I say to Mr. Peterson, you can thank your colleagues for a defined contribution pension plan and for being so leading edge and progressive and enlightened in their day, for taking you at rocket speed into the next century, because the rest of the working world’s had to do catch-up. Their defined benefit pension plans are only collapsing now. Your defined benefit pension plan was voluntarily surrendered by your Liberal colleagues here in the chamber—smart people every one of them, thoughtful people. In fact, Mario Sergio from York West supported the defined contribution pension plan—leading edge.

Mr. Peterson, if you want him to explain to you why you have a defined contribution pension plan instead of some gold-plated defined benefit pension plan, you sit down with Mr. Sergio, and Mr. Sergio from York West I’m sure will be pleased to sit down with you. Take him down to Sutton Place, the unionized little bar down the road here, and buy him a glass of soda water and explain to him, Mr. Sergio, why you supported the defined contribution pension plan that Mr. Peterson is now a member of, that Ms. Mossop is a member of, that Mr. Milloy is a member of, that Ms. Wynne is a member of.

I’m sure they will find ways to express their gratitude towards you. I’m sure that once they reflect on the matter, and after you’ve explained to them why you did it, Mr. Duguid would say, “No, Mr. Sergio, it’s my time to buy a round of drinks.” He will be so grateful upon learning about why you voted for a defined contribution pension plan for him and why you surrendered the prospect of a defined benefit pension plan for him and, I suppose, his wife and kids as well.

*Interjection.*



**Mr. Kormos:** I'm not going to draw the Speaker into this, Mr. Berardinetti, now that you're in Hansard. It's fine. People know where you were this afternoon.

Newly elected Conservative members, newly elected Liberal members or newly elected New Democrats should check the record, 1996, and I've talked about that defined contribution pension plan—I don't want to hear any MPPs coming to me saying, "We don't have a pension plan." Of course you've got a pension plan. As a matter of fact, remember the envelope you got just the other day that said, "Open immediately. Important pension plan information"? Well, you got the letter, didn't you? It said, "Important pension plan information." If you didn't belong to a pension plan, Mr. Sergio, how can you get a letter saying, "Important pension plan information," addressed to you?

**Mr. Mario Sergio (York West):** Are you talking to me?

**Mr. Kormos:** Yes. I'm sure you got the same letter I got. It's called a defined contribution pension plan. You were just ahead of your time.

I don't want to hear any nonsense from any members about, "Oh, Kormos, we need our pension plan back." No, you've got one.

**Mr. Sergio:** Come on, Peter.

**Mr. Kormos:** The government contributes money to your defined contribution pension plan every month. It's the pension plan you voted for, Mr. Sergio. It's the pension plan that you, as a thoughtful, intelligent person, agreed was the right way to go.

I was here. It's true. Mr. Sergio in 1996 said, "By gosh, by golly, we're going to move with this defined contribution pension plan."

**Mr. Sergio:** Come on.

**Mr. Kormos:** So Mr. Sergio has a pension plan that the government makes a contribution to, as his employer, every month. Mr. Peterson has a pension plan that the government contributes to every month. Mr. Berardinetti has one. Ms. Sandals got one.

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I say, God bless every month, because I get that pension contribution every month too. What is it—5% of my salary? Is that what it comes to annually? So 5% is contributed. Well, most of the working world increasingly is on defined contribution pension plans. You're just with the mainstream now. The world has finally caught up with you. So I salute you, members, for your creative—oh, you have more control over it, right, your defined contribution pension plan? The last week has been troublesome but, as Linda Leatherdale says, what goes up must come down. I'm a fan of Linda Leatherdale. I got her into the comments this afternoon. It's true; I like Ms. Leatherdale. She and I have done a lot of work together, a lot of stuff on a number of different issues, including the ever-increasing auto insurance rates, even today as we speak, in 2006 the auto insurance premium rates.

But between you and me, Speaker—pretend they're not here—I find it incredible how I can get Mr. Sergio

sputtering and muttering about pension plans when I'm giving him a compliment. I'm telling him I respect his intelligent, thoughtful decision to vote in favour of defined contribution pension plans.

My leader and colleague, Howard Hampton, is here. He was here in 1996.

**Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** I remember. I remember the vote.

**Mr. Kormos:** Liberals, Conservatives and New Democrats voted in favour of defined contribution pension plans to the final person. They thought it was the best thing since buttered popcorn. They thought they had died and gone to heaven. Nobody turned down the 5% of their salary every year that was contributed to that pension plan, did they, Mr. Hampton?

**Mr. Hampton:** That's right.

**Mr. Kormos:** Not a one. They have been able to invest it and watch it grow in an equity market that I'm sure has been very profitable for you, Mr. Sergio. I'm sure it has been very lucrative for you. Of course, you've got the high-priced counsel and advisers, paid for by the taxpayer, who counsel you and advise you on your investments. That's paid for by the taxpayers. It's all part of the package.

So, MPPs aren't doing that shabbily after all, are they? Mind you, compared to John Baird and David Christopherson, we're poor country cousins. I have no hesitation in telling you that. A junket for a provincial legislator, unless he or she is part of that inner circle, means a day trip to Timmins. But when you're with the federal Parliament, you're talking about spreading your wings and travelling, aren't you? Salary? Ha—mere chicken feed here compared to federal members. It is. A federal backbencher, with the new proposal, is going to be making more than the Premier, I think. Federal MP backbenchers, the lowest people on the totem pole, the members of the losers' club whose own leaders don't know their names, make more money than provincial cabinet ministers. And they've got the Air Canada passes so they fly free with their spouse of choice. Well, you know: girlfriend, boyfriend, mistress, whatever. They've got the Air Canada pass. I'm not sure—maybe somebody correct me—because all the time when I get on a plane and get stashed in the back, the plane to Kingston or Ottawa, I'm up there and I feel like I'm in a go-kart, you know, with my knees up around my neck, sitting in a seat that's 10 sizes too small, but the federal members always sit in the business section. So I don't know what's going on. They insist it's only business, like business class. There is no first class in those little planes. But they're sitting in there in the leather seats with the armrests, where even as people of substance—because of course they all think they're people of substance, and many of them are people of substance.

**Mr. John Wilkinson (Perth-Middlesex):** Physically.

**Mr. Kormos:** That's right, the girth. They're sitting there, they're planted in these seats. I haven't got an armchair in my house that's that wide. You've got these big, fat guys sitting there, and of course they don't drink

the cheap red wine out of those plastic cups. No, that airline attendant is serving the bubbly in the crystal glass.

But we MPPs get herded through there, and sometimes I've sort of stopped at the door and tried to—but no, they get a couple of the stronger airline attendant people and they just sort of pick up and push me through. And I end up in the back, because I'm only an MPP.

If you were a federal member—you ask John Baird. You ask him what life is like now. No more back of the airplane. No more counting pennies when your paycheque comes, and no more defined contribution pension plan either. The feds will have none of that nonsense. Defined benefit plans: That's the way to go. Everything is gold-plated for the federal guys—everything.

I have regard for provincial members who, back in 1996, showed frugality by abandoning the defined benefit pension plan. For those who just came in, you won't know, but I had a private member's bill that would amend the defined benefit pension plan to merely make it necessary to be 55 before you could collect. You guys didn't think that was good enough. You didn't. No, Mike Harris and the Tories—and the Liberals and New Democrats went along for the ride—said, "No. Let's just abolish the whole thing."

So friends, you should be proud of yourselves, because your newly elected members are proud of you. Your colleagues who have been elected since then hold you in the highest of regard every time they reflect on the pension plans and the salaries here at Queen's Park. They do. They think about you at night. When the American Express bill comes in and it's larger than they thought it was going to be, and they look at their bank balance, they think about you a whole lot, and I'm sure they are thoughts of gratitude and affection. They're endearing thoughts. They write imaginary letters to you.

**Mr. Hampton:** Not when the hydro bill comes.

**Mr. Kormos:** That's right. As Howard says, when the hydro bill comes and the kids have been leaving the windows open even though it's only winter, right? Because kids do that sort of thing; they don't think about that stuff. Your colleagues are saying, "Jeez, I got the hydro bill. It's gone sky-high." Tory colleagues reflect upon the sound—oh yes, the oh-so sound and enviable Tory

privatization agenda, and their Liberal successors are inclined to do the same with respect to the sky-high electricity rates of their regime.

Thank you kindly, Speaker, for your attention. I look forward to working with all of you as you continue to enjoy the avant-garde status of being members of the defined contribution pension plan.

I understand now why the government eliminated the retirement age, because it's about working until you die. Welcome to the real world, friends. If it's good enough for the woman in the Sheraton Centre, flipping mattresses and cleaning toilets, because she's got to work until she dies, it's good enough for you. So your affinity with the working class, your desire to act in solidarity with them, your elimination of the retirement age is so dearly appreciated by so many workers, I'm sure, like that woman in the Sheraton Centre flipping mattresses and cleaning toilets. She wants you to share her relations. She wants you to share her future.

Thank you kindly, Speaker. We'll be voting for this bill.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Joseph N. Tascona):** Questions and comments? Seeing none, further debate? Any response from the minister?

**Hon. Mr. Phillips:** No, Mr. Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker:** The minister has moved third reading of Bill 41, An Act to create a comprehensive system of rules for the transfer of securities that is consistent with such rules across North America and to make consequential amendments to various Acts. Is it the pleasure of the House that this motion carry? Carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

Orders of the day?

**Hon. David Caplan (Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal, Deputy Government House Leader):** Speaker, I move adjournment of the House.

**The Acting Speaker:** The deputy House leader has moved adjournment of the House. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

This House does now stand adjourned until Monday, May 29, at 1:30 p.m. of the clock.

*The House adjourned at 1641.*



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Julia Munro, Richard Patten,  
Norman W. Sterling, David Zimmer  
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Dave Levac, Gerry Martiniuk, Bill Murdoch,  
Khalil Ramal, Mario Sergio, Tony C. Wong  
Clerk / Greffière: Susan Sourial

**Social Policy / Politique sociale**

Chair / Président: Shafiq Qaadri  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Khalil Ramal  
Ted Chudleigh, Peter Fonseca,  
Kuldip Kular, Jeff Leal,  
Rosario Marchese, John O'Toole,  
Shafiq Qaadri, Khalil Ramal, Kathleen O.Wynne  
Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

**Electoral reform / Réforme électorale**

Chair / Présidente: Caroline Di Cocco  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Norm Miller  
Wayne Arthurs, Caroline Di Cocco,  
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No. 80A

N° 80A

ISSN 1180-2987

**Legislative Assembly  
of Ontario**

Second Session, 38<sup>th</sup> Parliament

**Assemblée législative  
de l'Ontario**

Deuxième session, 38<sup>e</sup> législature

**Official Report  
of Debates  
(Hansard)**

**Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)**

**Monday 29 May 2006**

**Lundi 29 mai 2006**



**Speaker**  
Honourable Michael A. Brown

**Président**  
L'honorable Michael A. Brown

**Clerk**  
Claude L. DesRosiers

**Greffier**  
Claude L. DesRosiers



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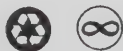
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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 29 May 2006

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 29 mai 2006

*The House met at 1330.  
Prayers. \**

### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

#### PHARMACISTS

**Mr. John O'Toole (Durham):** Bill 102 is going to guarantee that Ontarians pay more and get less.

I've just come from morning committee hearings on Bill 102, where I heard the concerns of community pharmacists about Bill 102 and what it means to their businesses and their consumers.

Last week, two local pharmacists met with the member for Scarborough–Rouge River, MPP Bas Balkissoon. The member wasted no time lowering the expectation of what he could do for the pharmacists. He said he has little input into Bill 102. He said he can't get a meeting himself with the Minister of Health. He said all decisions are made by the Minister of Health. But that hasn't stopped the member for Scarborough–Rouge River from staying on the government message.

He echoes the statements of staffers in the minister's very office, which we raised in the House just two weeks ago: "We can't afford all the services we have. We'll have to make sacrifices. Some pharmacies will close and the government is aware of that." He said that if people don't like Bill 102, then "we'll have government pharmacies and we'll employ the pharmacists."

The minister denied last week that the closure of pharmacies was official government policy, but he's clearly being contradicted by his staffers and by members of the Liberal backbench. It's time for the minister to come clean and admit that Bill 102 is going to be devastating to community pharmacies across the province.

Further comments, from the Coalition of Ontario Pharmacy, dated May 25 say, "Jeff Leal ignores pharmacists."

"This morning, a dozen local pharmacists gathered at Mr. Leal's constituency office before it opened. When staff arrived around 8 a.m., the pharmacists tried again.... They were rebuffed."

No one is listening to the pharmacists today.

#### SCHOOL SAFETY

**Mr. John Milloy (Kitchener Centre):** During constituency week, I had the opportunity to visit a number of

schools in my riding, including Queen Elizabeth Public School. While there, the school principal, Jeff Lovell, and the vice-principal, Neil Swayze, kindly provided me with a tour and introduced me to some of the new initiatives they have launched since the 2004-05 school year.

Under a program known as Imagine a School Without Bullying, Queen Elizabeth Public School has implemented creative anti-bullying strategies while helping to create a school climate that's both positive and inclusive. As part of the Imagine program, the school introduced ROAR. The letters of ROAR spell out the foundation for a welcoming school environment: respect, others, attitude and responsibility.

Jeff Lovell and Neil Swayze, along with the entire teaching staff at Queen Elizabeth, have also started school-wide initiatives that reward students who show a sense of leadership and who demonstrate kindness towards others. This approach has had a tremendous impact on the school atmosphere. Detentions have dropped significantly over the past year and a half, new friendships are being developed and students are learning the skills needed to resolve disputes through discussion.

The vision of the Imagine program does not end with the school day. The teachers and staff at the school encourage students to use these skills in their out-of-classroom activities.

Thank you to all the teachers, staff and students at Queen Elizabeth for welcoming me to their school and for making such a positive impact on our community.

#### PHARMACISTS

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh (Halton):** Given that the Minister of Health is refusing to meet with his Liberal caucus colleagues, it should come as no surprise that some of them are following his lead and refusing to meet with those affected by Bill 102.

On May 24 of last week, in the middle of constituency week, three local community pharmacists in Peterborough gathered at the local MPP's office to discuss their concerns about this onerous bill that's going to put them out of business, but they couldn't get near their MPP. They couldn't even talk to his staff, because in the middle of constituency week, his office was closed.

The next day, at 8 a.m., a dozen local pharmacists gathered at the member for Peterborough's constituency office. They were told that they couldn't meet with their MPP. They were told they couldn't meet with him during



constituency week. They were told they wouldn't be able to meet with the member until June 2 at the earliest, by which time this bill will just about be all wrapped up.

The pharmacists stuck around for an hour, hoping to appeal directly to the local member. He showed up at 9 a.m. Here's how the pharmacists describe their encounter:

"Other than to make a comment about the presence of a few local reporters, MPP Jeff Leal ignored the pharmacists and walked right by them. He said nothing to them and refused to acknowledge their presence. Taking the example of the MPP, the office staff members also ignored the pharmacists and did not speak to them. Disappointed, the pharmacists left."

Disappointed? Disappointed with Bill 102. Let me tell you, the people of Ontario are disappointed with this government, and they will be more disappointed on October 7—

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Members' statements.

### HOSPITAL FUNDING

**Mr. Jim Brownell (Stormont-Dundas-Charlottenburgh):** The city of Cornwall in my riding of Stormont-Dundas-Charlottenburgh is one of the oldest in Ontario and has a long, proud history. Along with that age, unfortunately, comes some aged infrastructure. Due to the neglect of the last government, important facilities like our schools and hospitals were allowed to crumble.

To add insult to injury, during the last election campaign the then Minister of Health came to Cornwall promising that he had a cheque in his back pocket for a new hospital. This turned out to be just another empty Tory promise.

1340

Well, with the coming of the McGuinty government, those days of jiggery-pokery are over. The people of my riding know that this government will deliver on its promise to renew health care infrastructure in the riding. They know this because we are getting not one, not two, but three capital hospital projects in my riding, two right in the city of Cornwall. St. Joseph's complex continuing care centre has not just a shovel in the ground, but girders going up in the air, and the Cornwall Community Hospital and Winchester District Memorial Hospital are following suit.

Before constituency week, during opposition motion debate, the member from Dufferin-Peel-Wellington-Grey made reference to my riding not having hospitals. He commented that Jim Brownell should be, and I quote, "producing a hospital for the people in Cornwall." I'm pleased, Mr. Speaker, to ask a page to come here to deliver to his desk photos of the St. Joseph's hospital construction on—

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Thank you. Order. Members' statements.

### PHARMACISTS

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer (Kitchener-Waterloo):** It will come as no surprise to the Coalition of Ontario Pharmacy that the Minister of Health is refusing to meet with them when he won't even, as we heard, meet with his colleagues in the Liberal caucus. The coalition is a grassroots organization that represents more than 80% of practising pharmacists and pharmacies in Ontario, and the Minister of Health refuses to meet with them.

Staffers in the minister's office have said there are too many pharmacies and some will have to close. That's a message now echoed by Liberal MPPs, as we heard earlier. Now they're refusing to let pharmacies anywhere near the minister, saying that they will only meet with the OPA.

As the coalition wrote to the minister on May 25, "We should not have to explain to you ... the difference between pharmacists and pharmacies." They go on: "Community pharmacies ... are where the business of pharmacy is conducted.... When the issues involve the closure of pharmacies, reduced service at pharmacies, fewer hours at pharmacies, and staff reductions in pharmacies, shouldn't the coalition that represents pharmacies be heard from?"

Minister, their requests are simple. I ask you, will you meet with them before the bill leaves committee? Will you let the pharmacies tell you first-hand about the negative impacts of Bill 102? Will you promise that pharmacies will not be the only constituency group shut out of your consultations?

### SOUTH ASIAN HERITAGE MONTH

**Ms. Andrea Horwath (Hamilton East):** One of the wonderful aspects of the month of May is the celebration of South Asian Heritage Month. As the month of May winds down, I'm pleased to report to this House that Hamilton is proud to be a part of South Asian Heritage Month as well. There were a number of tremendously successful events held to highlight the South Asian presence in our community, in keeping with the 2006 theme: "Acknowledge, Educate and Celebrate."

The Indo-Canadian Networking Council of Hamilton and area presented a gala dinner and musical concert on Saturday night in celebration of South Asian Heritage Month at the Hamilton Convention Centre, and a friend of mine, Neeraj Prem, a renowned classical musician, entertained people all evening long. Hamilton Place Studio Theatre presented an Indian classical music festival during the month. The Downtown Arts Centre held a day of celebration and exhibition earlier in the month. Plans have been put in place for our annual Sikh parade.

Last week, the Hamilton East NDP riding association and I hosted a great event to celebrate the South Asian community's contribution at Pulkhari's restaurant on Queenston Road and Highway 20. It was a wonderful time, wonderful food, and we welcomed community leaders like Ram Kamath, president of the Hamilton area



Hindu Samaj temple. I must remind the McGuinty government once again of the community's need for funding to rebuild their temple after fire destroyed it in a hate-motivated crime after September 11, 2001.

Today, Ontario is home to more than 500,000 people of South Asian origin, about 7% of our population. While the South Asian community has preserved and shared its traditions, it has at the same time contributed to virtually every facet of business and public service in our communities. I ask all members of this House to join me in paying tribute to the contribution—

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Thank you. Members' statements.

### OPPORTUNITIES FAIR

**Ms. Kathleen O. Wynne (Don Valley West):** On Saturday, May 27, I had the privilege of hosting an opportunities fair at the Flemingdon Resource Centre with more than 50 community, government and business exhibitors. The opportunities fair was a chance for all residents, especially youth in my riding, to learn about government training initiatives, employment opportunities, adult learning courses, volunteerism, job search techniques and community-based programs and services.

This initiative was born in my community safety round table as a way to bring information on job training and job search skills directly to the residents. The community safety round table is very engaged in working on an action plan that will develop community-based initiatives, and information about employment opportunities is one of the key areas that the community leaders identified as a major issue.

I strongly believe that community safety depends on preventing violence from happening in the first place. We need to make sure that all residents have the information they need before any issues happen.

I want to thank all the exhibitors who attended the opportunities fair, including Alpha Labs, Costi, Don Mills Employment and Resource Centre, Early Years Centres, Flemingdon Neighbourhood Office, Common Ground Co-op, Woodgreen, Frontier College, McDonald's, Job Connect, George Brown College, Humber College, the Ontario March of Dimes, Canada World Youth, Overland Learning Centre, Enterprise Toronto, Seneca College, our own Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, the Thorncliffe Neighbourhood Office, Boys and Girls Clubs, Maytree Foundation, the Toronto Youth Cabinet, Youth Assisting Youth, and there were many more.

Thank you to everyone who took part. I know the residents of Don Valley West who attended appreciated all your efforts.

### POSTER CONTEST

**Mr. Kim Craitor (Niagara Falls):** In my riding of Niagara Falls, the regional public health unit recently was proud to honour the winners of the fifth annual tobacco-

free-living poster contest. This year's theme was "My smoke-free Ontario means...."

Eighteen area elementary students received awards, with the winning entries to be used for today's promotion of World No-Tobacco Day, which also is the day the Smoke-Free Ontario Act comes into force, banning smoking in all indoor areas across the province.

A total of 4,247 entries were received as part of the contest, representing 78 elementary schools in all 12 municipalities across the Niagara region. Awards were presented in three categories, both French and English: primary, junior and intermediate. Award winners represented schools from Welland, St. Catharines, Niagara Falls and Port Colborne.

From my riding of Niagara Falls, Jesse LeBrasseur of Niagara-on-the-Lake finished third. Recipients from the City of Niagara Falls included Julia Lambourne, third in the primary division; Priscilla Pangan and Carly Milani, second and third in the junior division; and Cindy Nguyen and Elizabeth Kim, second and third in the intermediate division. These students and the Niagara region public health unit, led by Dr. Robin Williams, chief medical officer of health, deserve our appreciation for a job well done. I had the opportunity to meet each of the students and personally congratulate them.

### CANADIAN PARAPLEGIC ASSOCIATION

**Mr. Dave Levac (Brant):** I'd like to draw to the attention of all the members of the House some very special guests that we have in the Speaker's gallery today. We have representatives from the Canadian Paraplegic Association Ontario: Michael O'Brien, chair; Lynda Staples, vice-chair; Joe Dowdall, secretary; Harley Nott, past chair; and Barbara Turnbull, honorary board member. Joining them are Bill Adair, the Ontario executive director; Linda Kenny, director of provincial services; Barb Sampson, CPA Ontario patron; and Radka Poliakova, CPA Ontario. We welcome you into our House today.

More than 60 years ago, John Counsell saw a need for an organization to assist our veterans who suffered a spinal cord injury while serving overseas. Sixty years later, the Canadian Paraplegic Association still thrives. There is still a need, but much progress has been made. As we go about our lives, sometimes complaining, often taking for granted, these people are here to remind us just how fragile life can be and how we must make the most out of the worst that we have received. They surely have done that. Most of them have made a life under those most severe adversities.

Tonight you have an opportunity to meet with our special guests by joining them in the dining room. You will learn first-hand from their challenges and their victories. Perhaps those of us who have not heard their life's experience will stop and think, and finally realize that for those with spinal cord injuries and other physical



disabilities, there are no limits. Can the same be said of ourselves? We welcome them and we support them.

### VISITORS

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** I would like to bring the members' attention to the Speaker's gallery, where we have, being hosted by the Windsor-Roseland Rotary Club, a group exchange team from northern Brazil: Fernando Prado, Manoel Coraci Dias, Dr. Pietro Pinheiro, Ana Cristina Candido, and from the US, Marta Richardson. Please welcome our guests.

### RESIGNATION OF MEMBER FOR PARKDALE-HIGH PARK

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** I beg to inform the House that a vacancy has occurred in the membership of the House by reason of the resignation of Gerard Kennedy as the member for the electoral district of Parkdale-High Park.

Accordingly, I have issued my warrant to the Chief Election Officer for the issue of a writ for a by-election.

### ROYAL ASSENT SANCTION ROYALE

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** I beg to inform the House that on May 18, 2006, in the name of Her Majesty the Queen, His Honour the Lieutenant Governor was pleased to assent to certain bills in his office.

**The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Lisa Freedman):** The following are the titles of the bills to which His Honour did assent:

Bill 41, An Act to create a comprehensive system of rules for the transfer of securities that is consistent with such rules across North America and to make consequential amendments to various Acts / *Projet de loi 41, Loi instituant un régime global de règles régissant le transfert des valeurs mobilières qui cadre avec celui qui s'applique dans ce domaine en Amérique du Nord et apportant des modifications corrélatives à diverses lois.*

Bill 81, An Act to implement 2006 Budget measures and to enact, amend or repeal various Acts / *Projet de loi 81, Loi mettant en oeuvre certaines mesures énoncées dans le Budget de 2006 et édictant, modifiant ou abrogeant diverses lois.*

### MOTIONS

#### HOUSE SITTINGS

**Hon. James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, Government House Leader):** I move that, pursuant to standing order 9(c)(i), the House shall meet from 6:45 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. on

Monday, May 29, 2006, for the purpose of considering government business.

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Shall the motion carry?

All in favour will say "aye."

All opposed will say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1351 to 1356.*

**The Speaker:** All those in favour will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

#### Ayes

Amott, Ted  
Arthurs, Wayne  
Balkissoon, Bas  
Barrett, Toby  
Bartolucci, Rick  
Bentley, Christopher  
Berardinetti, Lorenzo  
Bradley, James J.  
Brotten, Laurel C.  
Brownell, Jim  
Cansfield, Donna H.  
Chudleigh, Ted  
Colle, Mike  
Craitor, Kim  
Delaney, Bob  
Dhillon, Vic  
Dombrowsky, Leona  
Duguid, Brad  
Duncan, Dwight

Elliott, Christine  
Flynn, Kevin Daniel  
Fonseca, Peter  
Hoy, Pat  
Hudak, Tim  
Jackson, Cameron  
Jeffrey, Linda  
Kular, Kuldip  
Kwinter, Monte  
Leal, Jeff  
Levac, Dave  
Marsales, Judy  
McMeekin, Ted  
McNeely, Phil  
Miller, Norm  
Milloy, John  
Mitchell, Carol  
O'Toole, John  
Parsons, Ernie

Peters, Steve  
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Phillips, Gerry  
Pupatello, Sandra  
Ramal, Khalil  
Ramsay, David  
Runciman, Robert W.  
Ruprecht, Tony  
Sandals, Liz  
Smitherman, George  
Takhar, Harinder S.  
Tory, John  
Van Bommel, Maria  
Witmer, Elizabeth  
Wong, Tony C.  
Wynne, Kathleen O.  
Zimmer, David

**The Speaker:** All those opposed will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

#### Nays

Horwath, Andrea  
Kormos, Peter

Marchese, Rosario  
Martel, Shelley

Prue, Michael  
Tabuns, Peter

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Claude L. DesRosiers):** The ayes are 55; the nays are 6.

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

#### MEMBER FOR YORK CENTRE

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh (Halton):** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: Today marks a momentous occasion, an event that happened 50 years ago in this province. It was the day that Wilma Kwinter consented to marry one Monte Kwinter. I have it on very good authority that her days of doubt have been very few and far between.

Congratulations, Monte and Wilma.

### VISITORS

**Hon. Laurel C. Brotten (Minister of the Environment):** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I'd like to let my colleagues in the Legislature know that today I've been joined by the grade 5 classes from John English school in Etobicoke-Lakeshore.

## STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

### STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS ÉTUDIANTS AYANT UN HANDICAP

**Hon. Christopher Bentley (Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities):** The McGuinty government is committed to the right of every person to find opportunity, achieve their life's goals and fully participate in every aspect of life in our province, including post-secondary education. We know that we will only achieve our potential as a province when every Ontarian achieves their potential.

We recognize the challenges that persons with disabilities face in obtaining access to and finding success in post-secondary education. Overcoming these challenges requires, in part, additional resources to help universities and colleges provide services for students with disabilities, services which will help them succeed in their studies.

Nous reconnaissons les défis auxquels font face les personnes handicapées en accédant et en essayant de réussir à l'éducation postsecondaire. Surmonter ces défis exige, en partie, des ressources supplémentaires pour permettre aux universités et collèges de fournir des services aux étudiantes et étudiants handicapés, c'est-à-dire des services qui les aideront à réussir dans leurs études.

I am pleased, therefore, to tell the honourable members that the McGuinty government invested more than \$28 million in 2005-06 to support services for students with disabilities. This represents a 10% increase over the previous year, and special financial aid supports are in addition to this total.

The increase of \$2.6 million has been used to support pilot projects, increase funding for interpreter services, enhance print alternate services for visually impaired students, and to provide additional funding to the offices for students with disabilities at each college and university in Ontario.

Services provided to post-secondary students with disabilities include: accommodations such as note-taking support for visually impaired students and interpreter services for hearing-impaired students; learning assessments to determine the nature of a student's learning disability; access to computers and appropriate technological learning aids; and extra time to write tests and exams for students with learning disabilities.

This new funding is part of our Reaching Higher investment to support increased participation in post-secondary education by persons with disabilities.

Under the Reaching Higher plan, the government invested \$10.2 million last year to increase opportunities for aboriginal peoples, francophones, persons with disabilities and people who are the first in their family to attend post-secondary education. This funding will grow to \$55 million by 2009-10.

Last summer, we established a new post-secondary advisory committee on disability issues to help provide advice on how to improve access to post-secondary education for students with disabilities and to enhance their success when in post-secondary education.

The investment we made reflects some of the advice we received very early in the committee's discussions. Future investments will benefit from this committee's continual and expanded input.

Our goal is to increase support to the more than 30,000 students enrolled in Ontario's colleges and universities who identify themselves as having disabilities. Our goal is to increase their opportunity for success.

This morning, Mr. Speaker, I visited the University of Toronto and the office that provides accessibility services to their students. I was impressed to see the special equipment and the services provided to ensure students with disabilities have the supports they need to succeed.

The people in that office, and in similar offices at universities and colleges throughout the province, are doing an admirable job of helping students with disabilities adjust to the challenges of their new environment.

We are achieving real results through our investment. We know that providing support and service to students with disabilities increases their chance of success at post-secondary education and in preparing for their future. The McGuinty government will continue to encourage and support them as they achieve their goals.

### NATIVE LAND DISPUTE

**Hon. David Ramsay (Minister of Natural Resources, minister responsible for aboriginal affairs):** It's a pleasure for me to rise in the House today to provide members with an update on the Caledonia situation.

Late last week, I spoke with Confederacy Chief Allen McNaughton and Chief David General. We had a frank and positive discussion about the situation, and I shared my appreciation for the progress made to date by Six Nations and Haldimand county.

In a letter I sent on Friday to the federal Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Jim Prentice, I sought clarification of remarks by Prime Minister Stephen Harper with regard to the federal role in the situation in Caledonia. It is important to note that this situation arose as a result of Six Nations' longstanding frustrations with their federal claims process—a process that has failed to address claims on the Haldimand tract.

I am sure that all Ontarians were pleased, but in particular local residents, when the blockades came down on Argyle Street on Tuesday, May 23. I commend the communities of Caledonia and Six Nations for coming together on this matter.

As the members may know, the Minister of Economic Development and Trade, Joe Cordiano, was in Brantford last Thursday. He advised the community that the province is providing \$500,000 in emergency financial assistance for local businesses. The province will work with



Haldimand county to distribute the funds where they are most needed. In my letter to Mr. Prentice, I said that I anticipated Six Nations would be requesting similar support from the federal government.

The province continues to work closely with those in Caledonia, and has set up a community liaison group to provide support to the community to share information. Made up of senior Ontario government delegates from a range of ministries and Ontario Provincial Police officials, the group is holding regular meetings with municipal and other community representatives. Again, in my letter to Mr. Prentice, I encouraged the federal government to nominate a representative for this group.

There's still much to do. However, I am hopeful that all the parties will build on the momentum of the positive developments of recent days and the goodwill therefore generated.

The provincial government has been working tirelessly to find a peaceful resolution to the situation in Caledonia. Well before the land occupation, Ontario, Canada and Six Nations had placed outstanding litigation brought by Six Nations relating to the Haldimand tract in abeyance and begun exploratory discussions. In early April, an agreement was reached to accelerate two of those claims.

Since the occupation, the Premier, myself and other ministers, senior government representatives and staff members from a range of ministries have been working very hard to ensure a peaceful resolution to the situation. In addition to the Ontario Secretariat for Aboriginal Affairs, ministries working on this file have included municipal affairs and housing, economic development and trade, public infrastructure renewal and culture. As well, the Ontario Provincial Police have been fully engaged in efforts to maintain order in a very difficult situation.

We named former Premier David Peterson as the provincial lead to help find some solutions to the immediate problems in Caledonia. A highly qualified and experienced individual, he has been empowered to negotiate on the province's behalf to ensure the removal of all blockades on transportation corridors. I have been in constant contact with Mr. Peterson since his appointment on April 29. He has done tremendous work to help address the current situation, and has made a commitment to stay on until an agreement is reached to remove the remaining barricades.

To address the longer-term issues that led to the situation in Caledonia, we appointed former federal Minister of Indian Affairs Jane Stewart as our special representative. She has had several meetings in the area and is eager to move ahead.

I would also like to point out that the province helped bring Canada into the negotiations and was instrumental in getting the federal government to appoint a representative, Barbara McDougall, to lead discussions with Six Nations on those long-term issues. The province will fully support the discussions through Jane Stewart.

The members need to know that the province has been and continues to be front and centre in addressing the

issues related to Caledonia. Let me briefly tell you some of the things we have done.

As I have mentioned, the province has been fully engaged. We were involved in discussions even before the current situation, and we have worked unstintingly to ensure a peaceful resolution to the situation.

From the beginning of the occupation, we have worked with Six Nations leaders to address the occupation and to find ways to resolve it.

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We have also sought federal involvement right from the start. Negotiations between representatives from Ontario, Canada and Six Nations resulted in an agreement on April 21 to discuss the long-term issues that underlie the Caledonia situation. Provincial representatives have held three meetings with Haldimand council. Staff from across government have worked as hard as possible and have held countless meetings with the parties in the Caledonia, Six Nations and Brantford area to address the situations.

As I mentioned, the province named David Peterson as provincial lead to find solutions to the immediate, short-term issues. We have also appointed Jane Stewart as the provincial representative in talks to address the longer term underlying issues. Funding assistance of \$100,000 was provided to Haldimand county to help promote local business affected by the situation. Assistance was also provided to the developer and offered to the builders for the costs and expenses incurred as a result of the current situation.

As I have mentioned, Ontario made a commitment last Thursday to provide \$500,000 more in interim assistance to local businesses in Haldimand county that have been affected, and we are continuing to work with the town, other community leaders and the developer and builders to resolve ongoing issues and promote local business.

The Ontario Secretariat for Aboriginal Affairs has established a 1-800 number to provide information on significant developments to the public.

I believe it is clear that Ontario has been very active in working with the parties to bring this situation to a peaceful resolution. What is also clear is that federal participation and leadership are absolutely essential in these discussions. The federal government has the primary responsibility for aboriginal people—a responsibility that cannot be avoided. While Ontario will continue to work very hard to resolve the immediate matters that are of concern to both the Six Nations and the Caledonia communities, it is incumbent on the federal government to take the lead on the long-term issues. Of course, we'll work closely with Canada and provide full support. Ontario remains committed to working with the federal government, Six Nations, Haldimand county, residents of Caledonia and others affected by the events in the community to achieve the best solution for all parties.

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Response?

**Mr. Toby Barrett (Haldimand–Norfolk–Brant):** You know, when we take a look at how this crisis in Caledonia and the Six Nations area is being managed, or



should I say mismanaged, by the McGuinty government, there's one word that does come to mind, and it does come up a lot down in that area: boondoggle.

The minister just recently talked about all the meetings that are occurring, but we've seen no management, we have seen no communication, we have seen no leadership and there is obviously no plan.

If you walk down the streets of Caledonia or if you go behind the barricades at Six Nations, which I have done, probably on 14 or 16 different occasions—on Tuesday, our leader, John Tory, was behind the barricades speaking with people—everybody wants to know what the government is doing, if anything at all.

We see a number of major flaws in this government's approach. People in the area feel the government is doing nothing. They feel as if they have been abandoned by Premier McGuinty and his cabinet. They want to know why the provincial government's Minister of Transportation wouldn't answer any questions in this House—he has now been replaced, I may add—about signage, about detour routes, about the collisions, about the problems tourists are having heading south. They are very concerned when they finally do see a Ministry of Transportation sign—a very large, well-lit sign put up at the north end of town—and it spells “Caledonia” wrong. They want to know if the Premier is even taking this issue seriously. It has been three months now. Is he just hiding under his desk, hoping that if he throws a bit of money at it, it will go away, or if he spends three months hoping that Ottawa will look after it, he can continue to stand behind the curtains?

Even if this government had been working on this, nobody would know. There's been no effort at all by this government to communicate with those citizens on all sides who have been affected; no elected members of government have come down. Sure, we get a video clip, we get the odd media statement—after Argyle Street was opened up, after some of the tough sledding had been done, work that was done by the community itself, by organizations that came together. Call them alliances, call them vigilantes, call them what you may, there was no government presence at all; people had to take matters into their own hands.

When people showed up in a video studio in Toronto after one of the battles had been won—Roy Green, on 900 CHML, used the expression “buzzards.” We all know that the vultures show up after a battle. This is the characterization we now have of this provincial government, certainly in central Ontario, those who listen to either CH television or 900 CHML. I don't necessarily use the word “vulture.” I compare the Premier and his cabinet essentially to cowbirds. The cowbird is a bird that lays its eggs in another bird's nest.

People want to know what's being offered in the negotiations. Is this government being stampeded? Are you giving the farm away? Again, all we get is silence. We asked the Premier, we asked this government, is South Cayuga on the plate? What do people in Dunnville think about that? Is Townsend up for grabs? What do

people in Jarvis and the community of Townsend think about that? What about Burtch? Is anyone communicating with people in Brant county? Again, will this get the railway open? Will this get Highway 6 open? Will it get the tourists down to Port Dover and Turkey Point? Will this get steel and gypsum and fly ash back up north from the industry that's along Highway 6 and down on Lake Erie?

True leadership requires leaders at a minimum to be present during a crisis. John Tory has been down there three times—as recently as last Tuesday. Not a single cabinet minister accepted my invitation to come down to Caledonia, to come to Six Nations during this last weekend when you were really needed. And we all know what happened on Victoria Day. We know what happened on bread and cheese day. That was a disaster.

**Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora–Rainy River):** I want to respond to the statement of the Minister responsible for native affairs. The minister seems to be trying to pat himself and the McGuinty government on the back, but I think a review of the facts would show that in fact the McGuinty government should be apologizing in some cases for its inactivity on this file, and in other cases for simply making the wrong move.

What I note in the minister's statement is that he says, “From the beginning of the occupation, we have worked with Six Nations leaders.” This was an issue long before an occupation began, and that's the real nub of the issue. For over 12 months, aboriginal people in the Caledonia area were saying to this government—and, yes, to the federal government—“There is a serious issue here.” What was the response of the McGuinty government? A failure to respond, a failure to take the issue seriously. So today the McGuinty government wants to pat itself on the back, but the reality is, for over a year, when there was room to avoid some of the conflict that happened, the McGuinty government once again was heavy on the rhetoric but missing in action.

I want to go on to immediately after the occupation began, because that was another interesting episode. When aboriginal people at Six Nations finally decided that the only way they were going to be heard and listened to by the McGuinty government was to put together a protest, a picket line, what was the response of the McGuinty government? Well, they say they were negotiating. They say they were discussing. But in the middle of the so-called discussions and negotiations, in go the OPP, and people not just across Ontario but across Canada got to wake up in the morning and witness that debacle, that failed strategy.

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But what became even more interesting than that were the two excuses the McGuinty government put out for the police raid. The first excuse was that the OPP had suddenly come in touch with some new intelligence and that the raid was going to head something off. That held water for about a day and a half. Then the McGuinty government's line was that the OPP had conducted a raid because of a private injunction. I want thoughtful people



across Ontario to think about that for a minute, because what it seems to indicate is that, under the McGuinty government, public policy will be dictated by private injunction. If you've got the money to get a private injunction, then you can dictate public policy and what the police will do in a public conflict.

Neither of those excuses offered by the McGuinty government holds any water. The truth is that the McGuinty government has not been on top of this file from the beginning. What is so sad is that the conflict here could have been avoided. The economic loss could have been avoided, the social dislocation could have been avoided, the hard feelings that have been created could have been avoided—all of that could have been avoided. But what we had was a McGuinty government that was asleep at the switch, not paying attention to what was happening, not taking it seriously, and today they want to come into the Ontario Legislature and pat themselves on the back.

I say to you, you shouldn't be patting yourself on the back; you should be apologizing to the people of Six Nations and you should be apologizing to the people of Caledonia, because you are very much responsible for how badly this got off track.

#### STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

**Mr. Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina):** I want to thank the minister for making yet another announcement of a pre-announcement of a re-announcement, and on and on. We used to make fun of the previous government for doing that, and Minister Bentley is replicating that model.

Any help we give to people with disabilities to break down barriers is a useful thing. This announcement is part of the government's plan to invest \$10 million in 2005-06, rising to \$55 million in 2009-10. God willing, if they get re-elected, maybe they'll spend the bulk of that money down the line in 2009, when we're going to have the next election. But in the meantime, thank you for this re-announcement.

#### ORAL QUESTIONS

##### TTC LABOUR DISPUTE

**Mr. John Tory (Leader of the Opposition):** My question is for the Acting Premier. This morning millions of people—Toronto transit commuters and GTA car drivers—awoke to find their subways and buses and streetcars parked, and their routes jammed for hours on end. Would you please update the House as to exactly when your Minister of Labour was informed of the possibility of this strike action and what action he took to alert the public about this pending matter?

**Hon. George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** To the Minister of Labour.

**Hon. Steve Peters (Minister of Labour):** I thank the honourable leader for the question. I received a call yesterday afternoon from my executive assistant informing me that the mayor of Toronto was seeking to speak with me. At approximately 5:45 last evening, I spoke with Mayor Miller and offered the mayor our assurances that MOL mediators would be available to work with both sides in trying to bring them together. That's when I first became aware of it.

**Mr. Tory:** That's a start, but the truth is that GTA and Toronto commuters, whether they be transit users or drivers, awoke this morning to find the largest city in the country in disarray: People didn't have a ride to school or to work, taxis weren't available, the subways weren't running. Many commuters are complaining, really more so than anything else, about the fact that they had absolutely no notice of this whatsoever.

Media reports suggest, and you have confirmed, that you knew about this yesterday afternoon. We'd like to know, then, when did you appoint a mediator to sit down with these people, what other action did you take and why didn't you at that time or at any time subsequent to that, before the evening was out, make any attempt whatsoever to notify the public of what was possibly or likely going to occur this morning so that they would have had some opportunity to change their plans? Why did you do nothing during that period of time?

**Hon. Mr. Peters:** I thank the member again for his question. I will comment to him that during the course of my conversation with Mayor Miller yesterday afternoon, there was no indication at that time that there was going to be any sort of illegal action taken. At that point, Mayor Miller was certainly aware that an issue had the potential to arise, and I reassured Mayor Miller that senior mediators from the Ministry of Labour would be available. Those discussions were taking place with senior mediators and they were certainly prepared to act and work with both sides.

**Mr. Tory:** Again, just to get some clarification from the minister, the implication of the minister's answer is that at no time was there in fact a mediator appointed and actually working on this file, which certainly was the suggestion in the news media yesterday. It doesn't really deal with the question as well as to why no efforts were made by anybody, including your government, the McGuinty government, to notify the public as to this issue. That is a given, that you did nothing.

The city of Toronto has asked today that employers, of which the government of Ontario is one of the biggest in Toronto, take measures to allow employees to have more flexible work hours and to encourage car pooling to take place. Can you tell me, did you in fact have a mediator on the job? Why didn't you communicate? And what have you done today, as an employer, to actually make sure that the afternoon rush hour—because this is still not resolved—will be easier for people? What have you done today?

**Hon. Mr. Peters:** Perhaps the honourable leader spent too much time in boardrooms and not enough time in dealing with labour relations during his tenure in the



private sector. He should maybe lean over to his right and speak to a former Minister of Labour to understand the appropriateness of what the minister should or should not do.

I think the member will be aware as well that Mayor Miller was as surprised as anyone this morning by the illegal actions that were taken. Mr. Kevin Whitaker, the head of the Ontario Labour Relations Board, was notified at 4:30 this morning. At about 7:10 this morning a press release was issued announcing the decision of the cease-and-desist order from the Ontario Labour Relations Board, and it was about 7:10 or 7:12 this morning that that information was relayed to the public.

### ELECTRICITY SUPPLY

**Mr. John Tory (Leader of the Opposition):** My question again is to the Acting Premier. Ontario wants an electricity system that is reliable and affordable. It's been 170 days since your government received the Ontario Power Authority's report on a recommended supply mix for Ontario's electricity system. When can we expect your government's response to this report and what can we expect will be in that response? What are we going to hear from you, and when?

**Hon. George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** To the very fine and experienced Minister of Energy.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan (Minister of Energy):** To the Leader of the Opposition, we will be responding to that report shortly. You're right; it's an important document. It will map out the next 25 years of energy supply in Ontario. There will be an opportunity at three-year intervals to review that plan, to update it. I'm confident that our response will be full and complete, and when it's released I'm confident that the people of Ontario will acknowledge that what we're doing is in the best interests of ensuring not only reliability, but a cleaner, greener source of power. The people of Ontario will respond well to a number of the initiatives, like conservation, which is so important to this province. You know, a megawatt saved is as good as a new megawatt of generation. I believe the people will respond quite well to our response.

**Mr. Tory:** In the relatively short time I've been here, I've learned that the word "shortly" can mean a lot of things in the context of how long it is going to be before we have that response to the OPA report. It has been 170 days so far.

My question to the minister would be this: Given that as each day passes, it is one more day when we're not able to get on with doing anything about this, it's one more day when the risk increases, can we expect that you're going to bring that response to the OPA report here to this House before the summer recess? Can we expect as well that the members of this Legislature are going to have an opportunity in some suitable place, whether it's here or somewhere else, to debate and discuss the implications of that report? What is the delay? What does "shortly" mean? Will you bring it to this

House and give us all a chance to talk about it before the summer recess?

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**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** We will respond when our full response is ready, but just to respond specifically to what it is we've done: November 2003, Bruce A, unit 4—770 megawatts; March 2004, Bruce A, unit 3—770 megawatts; Imperial Oil gas, June 2004—978 megawatts; Brighton Beach gas, July 2004—581 megawatts; Northland Power gas, July 2004—32 megawatts; Eastview Landfill gas, June 2005—three megawatts; Pickering A, unit 1, November 2005—515 megawatts; GTAA cogen, December 2005—90 megawatts; Glenn Miller hydro, January 2006—eight megawatts; Melancthon 1, March 2006—67 megawatts.

This government has taken the steps needed to keep the power on. I can assure the Leader of the Opposition that we will take the necessary steps in our response to ensure that that power stays on for another 25—

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Final supplementary.

**Mr. Tory:** I'll avoid the temptation to ask the minister which of those he actually plans to turn on on the hot days when the power supply system of Ontario is under stress, because there's a good number of those that you won't be able to turn on, and you know that.

Having said that, while we're on the subject of an affordable electricity supply, it's been many days—weeks—since you undertook to meet with the representatives of the OPG and Hydro One to discuss compensation and bonus issues. As you know, at the stroke of a pen, in one minute, your government and emanations of your government could approve a \$500,000 bonus for the CEO of one of those companies, but no one could come to this place and explain what that bonus was paid for. You've had 55 days to have those meetings with those officials. When are you going to come here and explain why and on what basis that person was paid a \$500,000 bonus at the same time as you were driving hydro rates to new heights under your government? When are you going to come here with that explanation?

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** The Leader of the Opposition won't have benefit yet of what's going to be released at 3 o'clock by the Independent Electricity System Operator, but for the edification of the House, I'll share with you what they're saying about this summer and about reliability. This will be released, as I understand it, shortly:

More than 600 megawatts of new nuclear, gas and hydroelectric generation have come online in the last year. Not only are they online, but they're working. Not only that, but the nuclear we brought on, we brought in on time and on budget, something that member and his party did not know how to do. Between 1995 and 2003, you cut the supply of electricity by 8.5%. The former energy minister, who still sits in this House, had the audacity to suggest that conservation doesn't work. In that member's riding, we have the first giant windmills operating. This is not an easy undertaking. It's one the



people of Ontario have entrusted to us. I can assure you the power will stay on, not only this summer but over the next 25 years.

### AIR QUALITY

**Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora–Rainy River):** My question is for the Acting Premier. The air people breathe shouldn't make them sick, yet today, in an airshed stretching from Windsor in the south to Huntsville in central Ontario, there is a smog advisory and people are choking on dirty, polluted air.

After breaking his promise to shut all coal-fired power plants by 2007, Dalton McGuinty promised to clean our air by shutting down the Lambton coal-fired plant by 2007 and the Nanticoke coal-fired plant by 2009. Lately, Premier McGuinty doesn't sound too sure of that.

My question is this: Can you clean the air? Is the McGuinty government going to close the Lambton coal-fired plant by 2007 and the Nanticoke coal-fired plant by 2009, or is this going to be, yet again, another McGuinty broken promise?

**Hon. George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** Minister of Energy.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan (Minister of Energy):** The government of Ontario remains committed to getting out of coal-fired generation in this province. We remain committed, unlike the member opposite, who has opposed our moves. He likes to have it both ways. When he's asking a question about a community that doesn't want it closed, he wants to keep it open; when he wants to appeal to the environmentalists, he wants to close them all.

The key is reducing emissions from coal. The key is reducing not only the direct emissions but, most importantly, the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. This government has set an aggressive timetable to meet emissions reductions that we believe are in the best interests of all Ontarians.

I invite the member opposite to join with us instead of voting against all of our initiatives to clean up the air, to join with us to help clean that airshed between Windsor and the Quebec border. At the end of the day, the less emissions we have, the more emissions we take out, the better off we'll all be. That's why we're fighting so hard to lower those emissions.

**Mr. Hampton:** Once again, I asked a very specific question: Is Lambton going to close by 2007, and is Nanticoke going to close by 2009? I heard a lot of words and no answer.

Here's the nub of the issue: The Independent Electricity System Operator says that because the McGuinty government has bungled the hydroelectricity file so badly, "The coal units [must be] available for a period of time beyond the announced shutdown dates."

So my question is, again, who's telling the truth about coal? Dalton McGuinty, who can't keep a promise, or the Independent Electricity System Operator, who says that the McGuinty government is going to break this promise again—that Lambton won't happen by 2007 and Nanti-

coke won't happen by 2009? Who's telling the truth, Minister?

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** One thing we know for certain is that that member isn't. The IESO has never, ever said that—

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** I think we need you to at least rephrase that. Withdraw.

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** I withdraw that.

What we can say within the confines of parliamentary tradition is that the IESO never suggested, hinted or otherwise intimated what the member says they did. Show me the paper. Show me anywhere they said that.

What I will show you is a press release, that's going out as we speak, that talks about all the initiatives we have undertaken that are ensuring not only that the lights stay on this summer but that our air is cleaner, that we're moving off the old carbon-based economy to a green renewable economy.

We will move heaven and earth to continue to achieve those objectives. We've already achieved significant progress in the reduction of emissions. Those increases will continue. I'll remind the member opposite—

**The Speaker:** Thank you. Be seated, Minister. Sit down. Final supplementary?

**Mr. Hampton:** I think we heard it. The McGuinty government will move heaven and earth, but Lambton won't close in 2007 and Nanticoke won't close in 2009.

I realize that the minister has been away from the file for a while, but I quoted directly from the last IESO report. "The coal units [must be] available for a period of time beyond the announced shutdown dates." That is from the IESO.

I ask the question again, because here's sort of the litany of events: Dalton McGuinty promises that all coal will be shut down by 2007. Then he announces, "Oops, sorry, the big one, Nanticoke: We won't shut that down by 2007. The biggest polluter: We won't shut that down. The plant that is responsible for most air pollution in southern Ontario: no, not till 2009." Lately he's been saying, "We won't shut them down until there's more power." I'm simply asking the question: What is—

**The Speaker:** The question has been asked. Minister.

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** The real answer is that this government is cleaning up our airshed and we remain committed to cleaning up that airshed and we're going to do it. We're going to do it by moving off of coal. We're going to do it by reducing the NO<sub>x</sub>, reducing the SO<sub>x</sub>, reducing the mercury emissions. They're already down substantially. Our reliance on coal is down substantially from when we took office.

Yes, unlike the federal government, we remain committed to Kyoto, and we will ensure that the energy sector in this province—that we achieve those goals and continue to move on.

That member is trying to have it both ways. In his supplementary he didn't say what he said in his first question, just like one day he says, "Close the coal plants," and another day he says, "Keep them open." We have a clear, concise policy that's designed to clean up



our airshed by removing the greatest polluters in this province. That's a record that is second to none in the history of this province.

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### ELECTRICITY SUPPLY

**Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora–Rainy River):** To the Acting Premier: I didn't hear an answer once again to whether or not you're going to close these coal plants by 2007 and 2009—no accident, because your real electricity policy, the one you don't want to talk about most of all, is your \$40-billion mega nuclear scheme. My question about that is this: You've had several months now to respond to the Ontario Power Authority electricity supply mix report. Can you tell the people of Ontario when the McGuinty government is going to respond to the OPA report? Is it going to be in here in the Legislature, where there can be public debate, or are you going to run and hide on that one too to avoid the public debate that ought to happen?

**Hon. George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** To the Minister of Energy.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan (Minister of Energy):** As I indicated in the question of the Leader of the Opposition, we will respond when our final response to the report is completely prepared.

I believe the people of Ontario will respond well and that they will accept the fact that we need to increase the amount of renewable energy we need in this province. I believe that they will respond well to the need to maximize our hydroelectricity opportunities. I believe they will respond well to the increased conservation initiatives that we will undertake as a result of our response.

His government, when they were in power, used to announce electricity price increases on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve in order to avoid public scrutiny. The member opposite may think that he can run and hide from having to respond by this kind of bluster, but I'd like to know—

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Hampton:** What people want to know is when the McGuinty government is going to stop trying to run and hide on its \$40-billion mega nuclear scheme. Canadian Press says that your government is delaying this electricity supply announcement until mid-June, maybe July; in other words, after the Legislature recesses. That really does sound like a government that wants to avoid accountability, wants to avoid any public discussion and hopes to make the announcement in the middle of the summer, when they hope no one is looking.

Minister, will you commit to putting the public interest first? Will you commit that your response to the OPA electricity supply report will be made here in the Legislature, where there can be public debate, public discussion and accountability to the people of Ontario?

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** There will be ample opportunity in the Legislature to discuss not only our response to the report but the response with specific projects that we're

undertaking. There's no question that public consultation has been and will continue to be a part of this, including dialogue with members of the Legislative Assembly. I can assure the member that this is a 25-year undertaking, and the House likely will sit at some time within the next 25 years. I fully expect that there will be a lot of opportunity not only to debate our response but to debate some of the things that will fall out from that response, which will require an enormous amount of public attention. I look forward to the member opposite and all members of this House participating amply in that debate, because it is a very important debate. We do agree on that point. Over time, there will be many opportunities to debate this in this House.

**Mr. Hampton:** Once again, earlier, no commitment to close Lambton by 2007 and no commitment to close Nanticoke by 2009.

Now I ask a simple question: Will you commit that your response to the Ontario Power Authority electricity supply mix report will be made here in the Legislature—not after a recess, not in the depths of the summer? You can't even commit to that. This is a serious debate. We need to have a discussion about conservation. We need to see some real commitments to energy efficiency. But it would seem that the McGuinty government, once again, wants to run and hide. A \$40-billion decision, which we know from our history can quickly grow to a \$60-billion boondoggle, needs to be debated in front of the people of Ontario. Are you going to have that debate here in the Legislature, or is the McGuinty government once again going to run and hide on your mega nuclear power scheme?

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** There will be full debate, full consultation, there will be opportunities in question period in the House, there will be all kinds of opportunities over the coming months and years to debate that. We have been having this discussion, really, since December of last year. That discussion is ongoing. We've had over 5,000 submissions from the public on all these issues.

Those kinds of debates and discussions are appropriate to this Legislature; they're appropriate for the people of Ontario. And it will be good to have them, because I'd really like to know where he stands, other than to take two or three positions on the same issue. He's always against everything. He cancels hydroelectric, wants to open coal, then close coal. It's time for all of us to put our positions on the record and be clear and unequivocal. This government has done that, we'll continue to do it and we'll be subject to debate not only in this House but right across the province as his—

**The Speaker:** Thank you. New question.

### PHARMACISTS

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer (Kitchener–Waterloo):** My question is for the Minister of Health. As the minister knows, public debate on Bill 102 started this morning, and I think the fact that more than 300 people applied to make representations to the committee demonstrates the high level of concern and anxiety.



We certainly have heard from pharmacists and pharmacy owners who are concerned about the potential negative financial impact of this bill. We heard from Mr. Patel, who says he will have to close his pharmacy in Stouffville if the bill is not amended.

We have now also heard from Helen Stevenson, the executive lead of the DSS, who has said, "We've done a very, very detailed analysis of the impact. We certainly do not believe that, as a result of the recommendations, pharmacies will go out of business."

I ask, Minister, have you done a detailed impact analysis and, if so, will you make it public?

**Hon. George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** First off, I think it's customary for the honourable member to talk about committees and not acknowledge that it was the tradition of her party while in government not to actually have the darned things work. This is a fundamental element of our process, and that's why we're proud to do it.

We should also note that the honourable member took away the voice of those 300 individuals and prejudged that all of them were looking to come to committee and to speak about concerns with the bill, when in fact we know already through today that many of the people who have made their presentations in front of the committee have supported the important principles that are contained in that legislation.

Here in Ontario, we seek to achieve the best possible price so as to use that advantage to purchase greater product in the province of Ontario. Incorporated in those reforms related to pharmacy—of course, we're working hard through our relationship with the Ontario Pharmacists' Association to address concerns. I can confirm for the honourable member that detailed analysis was done. But in the absence of a clear picture with respect to rebates, which we hope this committee work will encourage, we will be able to continue to work with—

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mrs. Witmer:** It's unbelievable that the minister would stand in his place and talk about consultation. There was never any public consultation on the recommendations that were contained within the bill. In fact, he has attempted to do a real snow job, because the public is totally confused about what's in the bill and what your intentions may or may not be. There is no transparency and as far as support for the bill, I'm afraid that if you listened this morning you would have seen it's certainly quite lacking.

There are people in this province—there are pharmacists, there are pharmacy owners—who are concerned about the financial impact, who are concerned that in rural and northern Ontario pharmacies may have to close and it's going to hurt patients. In some instances, there's no doctor, there's no nurse. Can you confirm that there was an analysis done and, if so, would you share this finally and be transparent?

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** Another lecture from the honourable member, who brought bills into this place and brought motions into this place that didn't even have

third reading debate—mimicking from staff members on the sidelines, I'm sure, is out of order in this place, but the Tory tots are at it again. What they are doing is distancing themselves from reality, and the reality is clear. We have worked vigorously with respect to the analysis. The challenge that is there, clear and apparent for everybody, is that there are rebates being paid out for which there is at best a murky picture.

We're working with pharmacy. One of the reasons that I indicated this morning on the issue of the \$25 cap was that we're going to maintain the current status, so as to address those concerns that have been expressed, particularly by rural pharmacy. This is a \$13-million transfer back to pharmacy, in keeping with our fundamental commitment, which is that pharmacies, particularly those in rural Ontario, will not just stay, but they will be more vibrant because they will be accomplished at the work of providing direct patient care to our—

**The Speaker:** Thank you. New question.

1450

### TTC LABOUR DISPUTE

**Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** My question is to the Acting Premier. This morning nearly one million people were shocked to discover that the public transit service they rely on, the largest public transit system in Canada, was simply not there: no buses, no streetcars, no subways. The McGuinty government was told yesterday afternoon that there was the real possibility of an imminent work stoppage at the TTC. Why didn't the McGuinty government take action—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Order. Stop the clock. I'm having great difficulty hearing the leader of the third party place his question. Perhaps the Minister of Health would recognize that, I need to warn the Minister of Health. The leader of the third party.

**Mr. Hampton:** The McGuinty government was told yesterday afternoon that there was the real possibility of an imminent work stoppage at the Toronto Transit Commission. Why didn't the McGuinty government act yesterday afternoon? Why were almost a million people put to an inconvenience on one of the worst smog days in the province?

**Hon. George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** To the Minister of Labour.

**Hon. Steve Peters (Minister of Labour):** The honourable leader should know of the role that the Ministry of Labour plays. The role of the Ministry of Labour is to provide, offer up mediation services to both sides, and that was the offer that was presented to the city of Toronto yesterday afternoon, that a senior mediator would be there to provide assistance for both sides.

The province of Ontario does not operate the Toronto transit system. But in a situation of a labour dispute the ministry has skilled individuals who are available. That's what we provided; we provided senior mediation services and made them available so that both sides could sit at the table to resolve their differences.



**Mr. Hampton:** You'd think that when it's the largest transit system in Canada and one which almost a million people rely on, the minister would have called the workers' representative and the city's representative and would have said, "I have a mediator. I want you to meet with the mediator now." That didn't happen, and as a result the system that so many people rely on wasn't there for them today. In fact, what seemed to happen is, you decided to act tomorrow. Can you explain once again why there was this failure of leadership, why this failure to act appropriately when you knew yesterday afternoon there was the real possibility of an imminent work stoppage that would inconvenience literally almost a million people? Where were you when you needed to be there acting?

**Hon. Mr. Peters:** I reiterate the comments that Mayor Miller made, that he was as surprised as anyone. The Premier and myself have advised both sides to abide by the labour relations board ruling that ordered this illegal stoppage to end, that it cease and desist. That is the message that has been delivered. I would hope that the honourable leader would be standing up and saying the same thing, that the decision of the labour relations board should be honoured.

I think it's very important to notify the House that both sides are saying that they're going to be going back to work.

#### SMOKING CESSATION

**Mr. Jim Brownell (Stormont-Dundas-Charlottenburgh):** My question is to the Minister of Health Promotion. Tobacco is a terrible addiction that has negative impacts on its consumers and everyone near them as well. The late Heather Crowe, who tirelessly advocated on the dangers of tobacco use, brought to the attention of all Ontarians the risk of smoking. Thanks to her work, we all know that smoking is our province's number one cause of premature death and disease.

With the passing of the Smoke-Free Ontario Act, this government has shown its commitment to the well-being of Ontarians, all the while looking to health care savings down the road that will result from less frequent smoking-related hospital visits. While this is an important initiative, it will take some time for smokers to be able to adjust to a smoke-free Ontario. As equal citizens in our province, they deserve to be able to frequent public venues like restaurants and enjoy patios in the summer. Some of my constituents from Stormont, Dundas and Charlottenburgh are concerned that this new legislation will keep them from being able to use patios. Could you clarify this aspect of the legislation for them?

**Hon. Jim Watson (Minister of Health Promotion):** I want to thank the honourable member for his reference to the late Heather Crowe. I had the real honour of having known Heather and attending her funeral on Saturday in the city of Ottawa, along with my colleague the member from Ottawa-Orléans, Mr. McNeely.

Sadly, in this province we will lose 16,000 people as a result of tobacco-related diseases, and one of those in-

dividuals was Heather Crowe, who put a human face on the struggles that people in the hospitality, restaurant and food service industry have suffered for many, many years. That's why I'm very pleased that within 48 hours, on May 31, the Smoke-Free Ontario Act comes into effect, which will give protection to individuals in the hospitality industry and customers. We've also expanded it, for those enjoying a meal or beverage outside, to ensure that if there's a canopy or any kind of roof fixture, individuals will not be allowed to smoke, endangering the health of hospitality workers or others enjoying a meal there.

**Mr. Brownell:** With these changes coming, there are some bar and restaurant owners who still feel that they will be forced to close their establishments due to decreased patronage when they are required to go smoke-free. However, just this morning in my local paper, the *Standard-Freeholder*, I read this headline, and I quote, "Former Smoking Ban Opponent Now Onboard: Restaurant proprietor says butting out good for business."

The article quotes Len Little, former chairperson of the Ontario Restaurant Hotel and Motel Association and himself a bar owner, who notes that although there was some initial impact experience to his business, staff and patrons alike have embraced the smoke-free environment.

Minister, what is your response to those who still believe that going smoke-free will harm their business?

**Hon. Mr. Watson:** There have been 115 studies examining the economic impact of smoke-free legislation to restaurants around the world. Jurisdictions like California, New York City and my hometown, the city of Ottawa, have all brought in progressive legislation that has protected not only hospitality workers but also individuals who frequent restaurants and bars.

The Westin hotel chain, one of the great premier hotel chains in the world, has gone 100% smoke-free in their rooms. Let me just quote one colleague from Ottawa, Phil Wasserman, who was a board member of the Ottawa region of the Ontario restaurant association when Ottawa went smoke-free four years ago. He said, "Some bars did have an adjustment period, but the more progressive ones renovated, brought in new entertainment and have done extremely well."

In Ottawa there are 181 more eateries in the city today than there were before the bylaw. I don't subscribe to the doom and gloom that some people have suggested. I have great faith in the entrepreneurial spirit of the businessmen and women in Ontario, and that in their heart of hearts, even those who oppose this understand that this is, after all, a health issue and that we want to offer the most protection possible to our patrons, our visitors and the hospitality workers.

1500

#### NATIVE LAND DISPUTE

**Mr. Toby Barrett (Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant):** To the Acting Premier: On May 9, in this Legislature I warned your Premier about the breach of security with



respect to the power system at Caledonia. While your caucus heckled, I warned that the lights could go out. Acting Premier, on May 22, just two weeks later, the lights did go out. Vandalism shut down the Caledonia transformer station, wiped out Caledonia, parts of Haldimand and also Norfolk. On May 9, your government ignored my warning, although your government did replace the Minister of Energy after the power went out. Will the Premier of Ontario agree that on May 9 he did nothing, despite my warning, to prevent the vandalism, resulting in the massive blackout on May 22?

**Hon. George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** To the minister of aboriginal affairs.

**Hon. David Ramsay (Minister of Natural Resources, minister responsible for aboriginal affairs):** I appreciate the question from the member. He did give us that warning. Actually, other people in the community had made similar warnings about the power system, and the government did listen. Those warnings were discussed and passed on to the appropriate officials. I have to say to the member that this has been a very complex situation. We obviously regret the use of violence or any unlawful activity, and we are working very hard to resolve this in a peaceful manner.

**Mr. Barrett:** The fact is the lights did go out. There was no OPP presence, no surveillance. Mr. Tory and I were up there the next morning. On May 9, I did warn the Premier of Ontario, and we've heard today that there were other warnings as well about threats to the integrity of the electrical system. There were Mohawk warriors on those towers. There was a Mohawk flag 130 feet up on a tower, right above the transformer station. As we know, on May 22, the Caledonia transformer station went up in flames.

But two miles north of Six Nations is the massive Middleport transformer station. This has a capacity of approximately 2,000 megawatts, and it's just up the line from the Caledonia transformer station. Can the Premier of Ontario assure this House that when warned by me on May 9, this government beefed up security at that massive Middleport transformer station, or is there still no OPP presence at the Middleport station? I was up there last night.

**Hon. Mr. Ramsay:** The member is asking about operational issues that are the responsibility of the OPP. The OPP are obviously very aware of the risks in the area and plan their surveillance and operations accordingly. As the member knows, that is a very separate function from government. The OPP are basically in charge in the area of security and protection. Again, I would just thank the member for his bringing that information forward, and it will be passed on.

#### CHILD CARE

**Ms. Andrea Horwath (Hamilton East):** My question is to the Acting Premier, and it concerns the \$1,200 child care benefit that families with children under six are slated to receive from the federal government. The fed-

eral government has said quite clearly that the \$1,200 will not affect federal income-tested benefits; for example, GST tax credits. Will you therefore likewise commit that the new federal \$1,200 child care benefit will not affect eligibility for provincial income-tested benefits such as child care subsidies, rent-geared-to-income housing subsidies, Trillium drug program, property tax credits and sales tax credits?

**Hon. George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** To the Minister of Finance.

*Applause.*

**Hon. Greg Sorbara (Minister of Finance, Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet):** I really appreciate this. I did not plant that question, I want to assure my friend the Minister of Government Services, and there are notes coming in from all over the place.

Being that this was just a couple of days back, I personally have not had an opportunity to go through all of the details of the federal Minister of Finance's budget. I am advised that the benefit will not be clawed back. I am hopeful that the federal legislation permits that, but if there is any more to add to that, I will certainly get back to my friend from Hamilton East.

**Ms. Horwath:** We're looking forward to a commitment from the government not to have those funds affected by income cut-off levels.

On another note in the same area, the new federal policy is also going to result in higher tax revenues for the province of Ontario. We believe it's incumbent upon the McGuinty government to commit those funds to child care.

You promised to invest \$300 million to create 25,000 new child care spaces. We know that that promise has been broken and that has never been done. So it's even more important than ever that you keep any promise you make in this regard. I'm going to ask you very clearly, will you commit that any new provincial tax revenue that is earned as a result of the new federal child care dollars will be dedicated in Ontario, to Ontario's non-profit, regulated child care system?

**Hon. Mr. Sorbara:** The national child care agreement that our government negotiated with the former federal minister, Ken Dryden, I think was a model for all of Canada, a great agreement. It would have resulted in some 25,000 new child care spaces in the province of Ontario. We are deeply committed to maintaining a strong and vibrant program. Already, some 14,000 new spaces have been committed. I will take her suggestion as information, as we consider both our fall economic statement and next year's budget. But just to repeat, we are very, very proud of what we've achieved so far. And with additional co-operation from the federal government, we think we can do even more.

#### CHILD SAFETY

**Mrs. Liz Sandals (Guelph-Wellington):** My question is for the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services.

*Interjections.*



**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Order. I can't hear the member for Guelph-Wellington.

**Mrs. Sandals:** First, Minister, I would like to add my personal congratulations to you and Wilma on the occasion of your 50th wedding anniversary.

Minister, since the Amber Alert program was introduced in 2003, there have been 11 alerts issued in Ontario. Fortunately, seven of those children for whom the alerts were issued were found alive and returned safely to their families. Unfortunately, my constituents are less likely to see Amber Alerts, since there are no electronic highway signs in my riding. How might last Friday's expansion announcement assist in more missing children being found alive?

**Hon. Monte Kwinter (Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services):** I thank the member for the question. The Amber Alert program is predicated on getting timely information out to as many people as possible about an abduction of a child. We have partners with the Ontario broadcasting association; we have partners with the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corp.—they run it on their 9,000 terminals; we also have the MTO signs. What happened is that on Friday we expanded the partnership to include Bell Canada and Bell Mobility. What this means is that now, if you register for free on the system, you will be able to receive an Amber Alert on your website or on your cellphone in a timely manner. We are convinced that the effectiveness of the Amber Alert program will be enhanced dramatically. Bell Canada alone has 25,000 of their employees on this network. By expanding it to include people virtually all over Ontario, we will in fact provide a more efficient service.

**Mrs. Sandals:** Minister, while the expansion of the program through the Bell network is great news, and I'm sure will make a great deal of difference, why aren't some of the other services—mine says "Rogers" here—included in the announcement?

**Hon. Mr. Kwinter:** What happened was that this was an initiative of Bell Canada, which approached the partners—the OACP, the OPP, the Ontario broadcasting association—and they have initiated this. They're absorbing all of the costs of the administration, but they are open to other carriers, whether it be Telus or Rogers or anyone else who wants to participate. They'd be delighted to have them participate. Right now, you can participate even if you're not a Bell subscriber, but there is a fee that will be charged by the other carriers. Hopefully, the other carriers will see that this is a worthwhile endeavour, will come on board, agree to absorb the costs of it and then all carriers in Ontario will have this incredibly effective tool.

1510

#### SMALL BUSINESS

**Mr. Tim Hudak (Erie-Lincoln):** A question for the Minister of Economic Development and Trade concerning the plight of small business pharmacies in the province of Ontario: As the minister knows, 700 pharma-

cies are small businesses—mom and pop operations. A large number of others are small business franchises. These small businesses are under attack in Dalton McGuinty's Ontario. Not only is the health minister taking \$500 million out of their pockets in the back office, but in the front office, higher taxes, higher hydro rates and higher labour costs are having a dramatic and increasingly negative impact on Ontario's small business pharmacies. What is the minister responsible for these small businesses going to do to help small business pharmacies that are having trouble making ends meet in Dalton McGuinty's Ontario?

**Hon. Joseph Cordiano (Minister of Economic Development and Trade):** To the Minister of Health.

**Hon. George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** I want to say very clearly that we have a lot of respect for the committee process. We've used it to very good effect in all past bills that I have had the privilege of bringing forward. At the conclusion of public elements of that, the government has an opportunity to bring forward amendments, as do the opposition parties. I would say that I think it's important to recognize that this is an important part of the process and we're listening very carefully.

We've already addressed one of the key concerns of a pharmacy this morning. I rather suspect that as we learn more about their revenue stream through the murky issue of rebates, we'll be in a much better position to make responses. I remain very open to doing that. We're working in close partnership with the Ontario Pharmacists' Association, and we believe fundamentally that the initiatives we're bringing forward will not impact the operation of pharmacy in Ontario. In fact, on the longer term basis with respect to recognition of the cognitive service they play, we will be able to enhance their roles as key front-line health care providers. We know this is essential, and we will get it done.

**Mr. Hudak:** I would have thought that if the Minister of Economic Development was going to refer the question, he would have referred it to the so-called minister responsible for small businesses in Ontario. It's a sad situation indeed for mom and pop small businesses that they now have to rely on a minister who has been found in violation of the Members' Integrity Act and didn't have the class to step down at the time. But I understand the minister wouldn't reflect it that way, because they're shrinking your ministry every time there is a cabinet shuffle.

I'll ask the minister one more time. The CFIB recently said about your budget, "This government takes the small- and medium-sized business sector—the group responsible for the bulk of new job creation and about half of total employment and economic growth—for granted ... the government is choosing to turn its back on the very people who could help."

Minister, surely you're going to stand up, or maybe your colleague is going to stand up, and fight for small businesses in the province of Ontario.

**Hon. George Smitherman:** In keeping with the tone set by the honourable member, let me read a quote by



Bill Murdoch: "I hear a few catcalls and that: 'Well, you guys had it for a year. Why wasn't it done?' I want to tell you why it wasn't done: because we had an incapable, incompetent minister ... in Minister Hudak. He shouldn't have been the minister. He was the minister, and that's unfortunate. He had his own agenda. He didn't want to do what the House wanted to do. That was passed in this House by all three parties, and he wouldn't do the job he had to do as minister. He had a year to do it and he didn't do it."

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** New question.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. Stop the clock.

New question. The leader of the third party.

### MINERAL EXPLORATION AND PRODUCTION

**Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** My question is for the minister responsible for native affairs. Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug First Nation has told your government that they are opposed to mining exploration and mining development within their traditional territory. But the McGuinty government has encouraged Platinex Inc. to pursue mining exploration and mining development, even though the first nation has said no. Now the First Nation has been forced to sue the McGuinty government because of your failure to honestly and openly consult with it.

The Mikisew Supreme Court decision says that you must honestly, honourably and openly consult with First Nations before you attempt to approve mining development in First Nations traditional territory. My question: When will the McGuinty government live up to its legal and constitutional responsibility with respect to this First Nation, instead of forcing them to go to court to get you to observe—

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Thank you.

**Hon. David Ramsay (Minister of Natural Resources, minister responsible for aboriginal affairs):** To the Minister of Northern Development and Mines.

**Hon. Rick Bartolucci (Minister of Northern Development and Mines):** The member opposite is right; there has been an action launched. So obviously, as a former Attorney General, he would know that it is inappropriate for us to comment on the particular case before the courts.

Let me tell you that this ministry and this government recognize the crown's obligation to respect and honour the aboriginal and treaty rights of communities, and that communities have a right to be appropriately consulted. There's absolutely no question that the Ontario Secretariat for Aboriginal Affairs has drawn up those guidelines, and each ministry will certainly draw up protocols. We're very, very proud of what our government is doing with regard to our duty to consult, and we will live by those Supreme Court decisions.

**Mr. Hampton:** I just want to read part of the decision to you. It says the crown's duty to consult says that you have to, "ensure that the representations of First Nations are seriously considered and, wherever possible, demonstrably integrated into the proposed plan of action."

Imagine the surprise of this First Nation and other First Nations when they heard you on the radio saying, on May 10, "As we speak, those guidelines are being developed, and as we speak, those protocols are being put in place." But the First Nations have hand-delivered to you and to your deputy their part, their views. You have not only ignored them, you have failed to respond.

Is that what the McGuinty government calls honest and open consultation according to constitutional law, when you ignore the very First Nations, and then go on radio and say, "Oh, it's all happening"?

**Hon. Mr. Bartolucci:** The member across has a very, very creative interpretation of reality. I want to tell you that the Ontario Secretariat for Aboriginal Affairs is drawing up these guidelines. Each ministry will be responsible for protocols. I am very, very confident that our ministry will have and will continue to live up to the decision of the Supreme Court. If the member had read the Ontario mineral development strategy, he would know that we are committed to that type of consultation, and we will continue to be committed to that type of consultation.

### WORKPLACE SAFETY

**Mr. Ernie Parsons (Prince Edward-Hastings):** My question is for the Minister of Labour. On May 19, our government announced enhanced protection for those who work in potentially dangerous confined spaces. This is in keeping with your commitment to improving health and safety conditions for all Ontario workers. Your announcement detailed changes that both strengthen regulations for workers who enter or work around confined spaces, while expanding the number of workers in workplaces covered by specific confined-space requirements.

For those who don't know, a confined space is defined as, "a fully or partially enclosed space that is not designed for continuous human occupation." Examples include holding tanks, vats or sewers. As one who is claustrophobic, I get the chills just thinking about that. As a result, working within or near a confined space can be particularly dangerous, since atmospheric hazards can cause suffocation, fire or explosion.

Minister, this is certainly good news. However, talk of regulation often meets with reflexive criticism. Some have asked if this will create more work and expense for employers. Will this be the case?

**Hon. Steve Peters (Minister of Labour):** I thank the member for the important question. This government is committed to supporting and protecting Ontario workers and Ontario families. That's why we're ensuring that workers who enter or work around confined spaces are properly protected. We've enhanced existing requirements and expanded coverage to include workers not



previously covered, for example transportation and municipal workers. These new requirements are effective September 30, 2006.

As we know, employers are already required to provide protection to all workers who must work in confined spaces. These changes, though, are going to help to clarify those procedures. They'll make it easier for employers to understand their responsibilities and for workers to know their rights and what they must do to protect themselves and their co-workers. We spoke extensively with employer and labour groups about these regulations, and we've received support from all sectors.

1520

**Mr. Parsons:** Minister, I spent my first three years of full-time employment working on construction sites and have a fair awareness of the hazards that exist. I am very proud of the positive steps that our government has taken toward strengthening workplace safety for the betterment of all concerned. Improvements to the Occupational Health and Safety Act benefit everyone, not just the workers involved but also their families, friends and co-workers. Workplace tragedies devastate entire families and can overwhelm entire communities. They can be financially devastating as well. Businesses know that a healthy workplace is a productive workplace. Regulatory improvements are all about injury prevention and protecting our working families. Minister, can you highlight some of the other regulatory successes this government has achieved?

**Hon. Mr. Peters:** Our government takes workplace health and safety very seriously. We've taken action to promote a culture of prevention out there right now. Here are some of the examples, and perhaps the member from Niagara Centre will be listening: Effective June 30, 2006, agricultural workers will be coming under the Occupational Health and Safety Act. We'll be providing these workers with the same health and safety protection that exists in other sectors, including the important right to refuse unsafe work.

We've also updated our asbestos regulations, enhancing protective requirements. For the first time, this provides for compulsory training for workers involved in asbestos. This is the most significant update in the past 20 years. We've amended construction regulations to bring them up to date with new construction safety requirements. Along with last year's 18 amended occupational exposure limits, we will shortly be releasing our 2006 consultation for review. Health and safety—

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Thank you. New question.

#### TEACHERS' LABOUR DISPUTE

**Mr. Norm Miller (Parry Sound–Muskoka):** I have a question for the Minister of Education. As you are no doubt aware, the Near North District School Board is the only board in the province that has not reached an agreement with their occasional teachers. Some schools have been reopened, but many others remain closed. For

instance, the William Beatty Public School, the largest school in west Parry Sound, is not scheduled to reopen. Many parents are frustrated.

Pam Stoneman wrote me, "My kids are so disappointed that they are not in school, especially my 13-year-old in grade 7. Why are my three public-school-aged children being punished? My husband and I work full-time. Child care is a nightmare."

Karen Hobson told me "that it is time for the Minister of Education to step in and reopen the schools and get the negotiations back on track."

The McKowens said, "We pay a large portion of our taxes towards education. It is time for someone to take responsibility for this lack of education for our elementary students."

These children want to be in school, learning. Minister, what are you doing to further the end of the strike in the Near North District School Board?

**Hon. Sandra Pupatello (Minister of Education, minister responsible for women's issues):** Thank you so much for this question. As you know, we have spent an inordinate amount of time talking to both sides in the Near North. The member near the area will likely know that our local MPP, Monique Smith, has been very involved with us as well. We have had ongoing conversations, both with the Near North board as well as with ETFO. Our priority has been from the beginning that children need to be in the classroom.

I was very happy to note, in discussions throughout this weekend, that more schools are open today. We anticipate that more schools will continue to open, and that in fact is the parents' priority as well as the teachers' and the board's: getting kids back into the classroom.

I will tell you that there has been a significant amount of discussion as well around the negotiation process. I am very hopeful that in very short order we would have good news for all of the people in the boundary of Near North.

#### PETITIONS

##### SEED GRAINS

**Mr. Bill Murdoch (Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound):** I have a petition to the Parliament of Ontario.

"Whereas farmers throughout Canada are suffering from the effects of low sale prices of their products, competition from subsidized crops grown in other countries, high prices of seed grains and forage seeds purchased from multinational seed companies, high prices of fertilizer (due partly to high oil prices), and high prices of necessary fuels for cultivating and planting their crops; and

"Whereas many farmers have traditionally kept seeds from their own crops to use as seed for the following year, or have purchased their seeds from neighbours; and

"Whereas multinational seed companies are proposing to sell to farmers genetically engineered seeds that will



not reproduce, i.e., sterile seeds called terminator seeds; and

"Whereas these terminator seeds would leave production of seed grains completely in control of the multinationals, since the use of these seeds would compel farmers to buy new seed grains every year; and

"Whereas these terminator seeds could possibly cross-pollinate with the traditionally open-pollinated plants nearby, causing crop failures, and eventually would cause starvation—there is no proof that it could not happen;

"Therefore be it resolved that, for the good of Canada and the world, Canada ban completely genetically engineered terminator seeds.

"We, the undersigned members of the Dromore branch of the Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario, petition the Parliament of Ontario to support and urge the Canadian government to completely ban the use of terminator seeds in Canada and our province of Ontario."

#### MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mr. Michael Prue (Beaches–East York):** I have a petition that reads as follows:

"To the Parliament of Ontario:

"Whereas amalgamation of the rural townships of Osgoode, Rideau, Goulbourn and West Carleton into the city of Ottawa, and are now known as wards;

"Whereas, as of 2001, there were 1,318 farm operations and a total of 80,060 hectares of farmland in the city of Ottawa;

"Whereas city council has only four rural councillors out of a total of 21, and will decrease to three out of 23 in 2007;

"Whereas decisions made by council are more applicable to city dwellers than rural and farmers;

"Whereas taxes have increased and services in the rurals have decreased;

"Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly of Ontario order a referendum be held in the above rural wards of the city of Ottawa asking the people of these wards whether they wish to separate from the city of Ottawa and form a separate county;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to order such a referendum."

I am in agreement and will sign my name thereto.

#### LCBO OUTLET

**Mr. Ted McMeekin (Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Aldershot):** I have a petition signed by some 600 residents of my constituency.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Don and Susan Pedie, being residents and business owners in Rockton, are requesting consideration and approval for an LCBO agency store to be located on their premises to allow customers and community equal access to the purchase of wine and spirits; and

"Whereas our proposal, application and added demographic and marketing data meet and/or exceed all

required criteria, based on published agency LCBO standards; and

"Whereas this petition is fully endorsed by residents, employees, community members and customers alike;

"We, the undersigned, agree with this request, endorse the efforts for approval to locate the LCBO agency store on the Rockton Berry Farm Country Market property and respectfully petition the Ontario Legislative Assembly to do the same."

I'm proud to affix my signature in support of this.

#### CHILD SAFETY

**Mr. Cameron Jackson (Burlington):** "Whereas eight-year-old Jared Osidacz of Brantford was brutally murdered by his father on March 18, 2006, during a court-ordered unsupervised access visit; and

"Whereas two-year-old Kevin Latimer died on February 2, 2004, after falling from his father's third-floor apartment window during a court-ordered unsupervised access visit; and

"Whereas Burlington MPP Cam Jackson has introduced Bill 89, Kevin and Jared's Law, An Act to amend the Child and Family Services Act and the Coroners Act to better protect the children of Ontario and mandate an automatic coroner's inquest when a child dies while in the care of a parent who is or has been the subject of a court access order; and

"Whereas Kevin and Jared's law will designate family members as having standing during such inquests and be eligible for financial payment of legal costs through the victims' justice fund; and

"Whereas the province of Ontario has unclear guidelines and inconsistent policies for court-ordered supervised access programs that fail to prioritize the safety and welfare of children above all else; and

"Whereas section 22 of the Coroners Act allows the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services to direct that a coroner's inquest be held into a death whose circumstances merit public scrutiny so as to prevent other deaths and injuries;

"Therefore, be it resolved that we, the undersigned, call upon the McGuinty government to call an immediate coroner's inquest and to pass into law Bill 89 as soon as possible to give Kevin and Jared the voice they were denied in life before any more children's lives are lost."

That has my signature of support.

1530

#### SPEECH AND LANGUAGE SERVICES

**Mr. John Milloy (Kitchener Centre):** I have a petition here on the subject of Better Speech, Language and Hearing Month.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas over one million Ontarians of all ages suffer from communication disorders relating to speech, language and/or hearing; and

"Whereas there is a growing need for awareness of the profound developmental, economic and social conse-

quences that communication disorders have on people and their families; and

"Whereas persons with communication problems require access to the professional services of audiologists and speech-language pathologists who provide treatments to improve and enhance quality of life; and

"Whereas effective treatment of communication disorders benefits all of society by allowing otherwise disadvantaged persons to achieve their academic and vocational potentials; and

"Whereas investments in treatments for communication disorders pay economic dividends in reduced reliance on other social services,

"We, the undersigned, in conjunction with the Ontario Association of Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists, call on the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to proclaim the month of May as Better Speech, Language and Hearing Month."

This is a petition I support.

#### LONG-TERM CARE

**Mr. Cameron Jackson (Burlington):** "Whereas long-term-care funding levels are too low to enable homes to provide the care and services our aging seniors and parents who are residents of long-term-care homes need, with the respect and dignity that they deserve; and

"Whereas, even with recent funding increases and a dedicated staff who do more than their best, there is still not enough time available to provide the care residents need. For example, 10 minutes, and sometimes less, is simply not enough time to assist a resident to get up, dressed, to the bathroom and then to the dining room for breakfast; and

"Whereas those unacceptable care and service levels are now at risk of declining" further;

"We, the undersigned, who are members of family councils, residents' councils and/or supporters of long-term care in Ontario, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to increase operating funding to long-term-care homes by \$306.6 million, which will allow the hiring of more staff to provide an additional 20 minutes of care per resident per day over the next two years (2006 and 2007)."

This has my signature of support as well.

#### PROSTATE CANCER

**Mr. Kim Craitor (Niagara Falls):** It's a pleasure to be recognized. I'm pleased to read the following petition on behalf of my riding of Niagara Falls, and it reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the government of Ontario's health insurance plan does not cover the cost of PSA (prostate specific antigen) test as an early method of detection for prostate cancer in men;

"Whereas mammogram tests for women are fully covered by the Ontario insurance plan for early detection

of breast cancer and PSA test for men is only covered once the physician suspects prostate cancer,

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"We support Bill 4. We believe PSA testing should be covered as an insured service by the Ontario health insurance program. Prostate cancer is the most commonly diagnosed cancer in Canadian men. At least one in every eight Canadian men is expected to develop the disease in their lifetime. Some five million Canadian men are currently at risk in their prostate-cancer-risk years, which are between the ages of 45 and 70. For many seniors and low-income earners, the cost of the test would buy ... a week's worth of groceries for some individuals."

I'm pleased to sign my signature in support of this petition.

#### FREDERICK BANTING HOMESTEAD

**Mr. Jim Wilson (Simcoe-Grey):** I want to thank Dr. Robert Banting for sending me this petition.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Sir Frederick Banting was the man who discovered insulin and was Canada's first Nobel Prize recipient; and

"Whereas this great Canadian's original homestead, located in the town of New Tecumseth, is deteriorating and in danger of destruction because of the inaction of the Ontario Historical Society; and

"Whereas the town of New Tecumseth, under the leadership of Mayor Mike MacEachern and former Mayor Larry Keogh, has been unsuccessful in reaching an agreement with the Ontario Historical Society to use part of the land to educate the public about the historical significance of the work of Sir Frederick Banting;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Minister of Culture and the Liberal government step in to ensure that the Banting homestead is kept in good repair and preserved for generations to come."

I'm happy to sign that petition.

#### CHILD CARE

**Mr. Tony Ruprecht (Davenport):** This petition focuses on the early learning and child care agreement with the government of Canada. It reads as follows:

"Whereas the people of Ontario expect the government of Canada to honour existing agreements with the government of Ontario;

"Whereas provinces and territories negotiated agreements with the federal government to ensure Canadians would have access to early learning and child care programs that are high-quality, affordable, universally inclusive and developmental;



"Whereas parents in Ontario have demonstrated a high demand for greater access to high-quality early learning and child care programs;

"Whereas Ontario's early learning and child care agreement with the government of Canada would provide Ontario families with at least 25,000 new high-quality ... child care spaces in the first three years;

"Whereas Ontario's early learning and child care agreement represents a \$1.9-billion investment over five years in high-quality early learning and child care;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to support the government of Ontario in calling on the government of Canada to honour Ontario's early learning and child care agreement, for the sake of the thousands of Ontario families who would benefit from it."

Since I agree, I'm delighted to sign this petition.

### CANCER TREATMENT

**Mr. Cameron Jackson (Burlington):** "Whereas Ontario has an inconsistent policy for access to new cancer treatments while these drugs are under review for funding; and

"Whereas cancer patients taking oral chemotherapy may apply for a section 8 exception under the Ontario drug benefit plan, with no such exception policy in place for intravenous cancer drugs administered in hospital; and

"Whereas this is an inequitable, inconsistent and unfair policy, creating two classes of cancer patients in Ontario with further inequities on the basis of personal wealth and the willingness of hospitals to risk budgetary deficits to provide new intravenous chemotherapy treatments to these cancer patients; and

"Whereas cancer patients have the right to the most effective care recommended by their doctors;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario to provide immediate access to Velcade and other intravenous chemotherapy while these new cancer drugs are under review and provide a consistent policy for access to new cancer treatments that enables oncologists to apply for exceptions to meet the needs of patients."

This has my signature of support.

### GO TRANSIT TUNNEL

**Mr. Tony Ruprecht (Davenport):** I have another petition that is focused on the Old Weston Road dilapidated bridged. It reads as follows:

"Whereas GO Transit is presently planning to tunnel an area just south of St. Clair Avenue West ... making it easier for GO trains to pass a major rail crossing;

"Whereas TTC is presently planning a TTC right-of-way along all of St. Clair Avenue West, including the bottleneck caused by the dilapidated St. Clair Avenue-Old Weston Road bridge;

"Whereas this bridge (underpass) will be: (1) too narrow for the planned TTC right-of-way, since it will leave only one lane for traffic; (2) it is not safe for pedestrians (it's about 50 metres long). It's dark and slopes on both east and west sides, creating high banks for 300 metres; and (3) it creates a divide, a no man's land, between Old Weston Road and Keele Street. (This was acceptable when the area consisted entirely of slaughterhouses, but now the area has 900 new homes);

"Therefore we, the undersigned, demand that GO Transit extend the tunnel beyond St. Clair Avenue West so that trains will pass under St. Clair Avenue West, thus eliminating this eyesore of a bridge with its high banks and blank walls. Instead it will create a dynamic, revitalized community enhanced by a beautiful continuous cityscape with easy traffic flow."

Since I agree, I'm delighted to sign this petition.

### LONG-TERM CARE

**Mr. Jim Wilson (Simcoe-Grey):** I want to thank the good people at Sara Vista Nursing Home in Elmvale for sending me this petition.

"We, the undersigned, who are members of family councils, residents' councils and/or supporters of long-term care in Ontario, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to increase operating funding to long-term-care homes by \$306.6 million, which will allow the hiring of more staff to provide an additional 20 minutes of care per resident per day over the next two years (2006 and 2007)."

I'm happy to sign that.

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** That concludes the time allocated for petitions.

1540

### CONSIDERATION OF BILLS

**Hon. James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, Government House Leader):** Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to move a motion without notice respecting the meeting time this afternoon and consideration of Bill Pr24.

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Mr. Bradley has asked for unanimous consent to move a motion without notice respecting the meeting time this afternoon and consideration of Bill Pr24. Agreed? Agreed.

**Hon. Mr. Bradley:** I move that, notwithstanding any standing order, at 6 p.m. today the Speaker shall adjourn the debate on Bill 117, An Act to amend the Income Tax Act to provide for an Ontario home electricity payment, and call orders of the day; and

That the debate on Bill 117 shall be considered to be one full sessional day; and

That the House be authorized to meet beyond 6 p.m. for the purpose of considering Bill Pr24, An Act respecting the City of London, for which the orders for second and third reading may be called consecutively and

on which the Speaker shall immediately put the questions without debate; and

That upon completion of consideration of third reading of Bill Pr24, the Speaker shall adjourn the House until 6:45 p.m. this evening.

**The Speaker:** Mr. Bradley has moved that, notwithstanding any standing order, at 6 p.m. today the Speaker shall adjourn the debate on Bill 117, An Act to amend the Income Tax Act to provide for an Ontario home electricity payment, and call orders of the day; and

That the debate on Bill 117 shall be considered to be one full sessional day; and

That the House be authorized to meet beyond 6 p.m. for the purpose of considering Bill Pr24, An Act respecting the City of London, for which the orders for second and third reading may be called consecutively and on which the Speaker shall immediately put the questions without debate; and

That upon completion of consideration of third reading of Bill Pr24, the Speaker shall adjourn the House until 6:45 p.m. this evening.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### INCOME TAX AMENDMENT ACT (ONTARIO HOME ELECTRICITY RELIEF), 2006

### LOI DE 2006 MODIFIANT LA LOI DE L'IMPÔT SUR LE REVENU (AIDE AU TITRE DES FACTURES D'ÉLECTRICITÉ RÉSIDENTIELLE DE L'ONTARIO)

Mr. Sorbara moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 117, An Act to amend the Income Tax Act to provide for an Ontario home electricity payment / Projet de loi 117, Loi modifiant la Loi de l'impôt sur le revenu pour prévoir un paiement au titre des factures d'électricité résidentielle de l'Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Debate?

**Hon. Greg Sorbara (Minister of Finance, Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet):** If I might just begin my remarks with a word to my colleagues in the Legislature, it's been a rather interesting seven months for me, sometimes difficult, but I would tell you that the support not just from members of my own caucus but of the two caucuses across the aisle has made it quite a bit easier. I'm delighted at being back in this chair and these responsibilities, that I am beginning my new role as Minister of Finance by speaking to Bill 117.

I want to make the point that I'm going to be providing just a few preliminary remarks on Bill 117 and sharing the remainder of my time with my parliamentary assistant, whom I haven't even had a chance to say hello

to yet since last week, the member from Pickering-Ajax-Uxbridge.

I want to start by thanking my predecessor, Dwight Duncan. He did an enormous job, a huge job, a great job as Minister of Finance, and it will take some doing to fill his shoes. He brought forward a remarkably comprehensive budget, a responsible budget, which he delivered at the end of March, and in that budget he made a decision to bring forward the legislation that we're debating today. I know that in his new responsibilities, which are like his old responsibilities, as Minister of Energy, he will follow closely the development of this bill which, simply stated, is a provision to amend the Income Tax Act to provide a benefit to assist those of most modest means in the province with rising electricity costs. In his new capacity, I want to wish him well. As he resumes the responsibilities of that portfolio, I know he will be following the progress of this bill.

Bill 117 is all about supporting our goal of providing assistance to the most vulnerable people in Ontario. We are responding to rising electricity costs with a program that delivers some support to those with the fewest options available to them and, proportionately speaking, some of the highest costs. Through the programs created by Bill 117, we will provide a total of some \$100 million to almost 1.5 million low-income families. As you'll hear in a few moments from the member from Pickering-Ajax-Uxbridge, these measures are part of a larger whole, a package of measures that our government is pleased to be putting in place.

I think it's important in our role as legislators and as compassionate human beings that we pause and consider the importance of this particular initiative. It's about more than just putting a few extra dollars in people's pockets, although it's certainly intended to do that; it's about recognizing that people with low incomes face difficult choices all of the time. If we can do anything to help lighten that load, so to speak, then I believe it is incumbent on us to do so. But we must pay more than just lip service to their needs, and we will do more. We must act in a concerted, responsible and prudent manner, and that's what this bill does. Our 2006 budget reflected that same dedication.

We welcome the opportunity to provide this assistance to the most vulnerable people in society, and I welcome the chance once again to address my colleagues and offer my support for our government's program. I do look forward to hearing the thoughts of my colleagues in this Legislature on this important piece of legislation.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. John Milloy):** Further debate?

**Mr. Wayne Arthurs (Pickering-Ajax-Uxbridge):** I am particularly pleased to be able to join in the debate today following the Minister of Finance, the Honourable Greg Sorbara. It has been my pleasure to work with him in his capacity as finance minister, and I look forward to continuing that relationship on a go-forward basis, until such time as the Premier sees fit to move me somewhere else to some other role with some other minister. But in



the interim, I very much look forward to continuing our working relationship.

I want to thank Minister Sorbara for his opening remarks in regard to Bill 117. I also want to congratulate and thank Minister Dwight Duncan. I know that during his time as the Minister of Finance, the job that he did, it was my honour to be able to support him in the development and presentation of his budget during this year. I want to wish him well in his portfolio, returning to the Ministry of Energy, obviously a key portfolio in our government as well.

You'll recall that in the 2006 budget, we made some historic investments in health care, education and post-secondary education in an effort to build a stronger economy. These included a \$218-million investment to support at-risk youth and vulnerable adults and families, bringing the total investment to those at risk in our province to some \$10.3 billion, second only to our investment in education and in health care. We recognize that in order for every Ontarian to participate in the province's prosperity, we must ensure that all effective supports and opportunities are available for all citizens.

Bill 117 builds on this commitment to help the most vulnerable in our community. In this case, low-income Ontarians who will need assistance with their electricity costs are those that will be the benefactors of this legislation.

1550

In my view, this is an opportunity for us to address what I refer to as the social and human deficit in Ontario. We propose to provide this assistance by means of a one-time payment of up to \$120 for families with a net income of less than \$35,000 and up to \$60 for individuals whose net income is less than \$20,000.

Research has shown that people with the lowest incomes spend more than three times as much of their income as the average Ontarian on energy costs and on electricity, and they rely twice as much on electrical heating equipment for their major heating systems. So we propose that the Ontario home electricity relief program to help mitigate these costs be enacted.

The mechanism by which we would deliver this assistance is really quite simple. Pretty much anyone who claims the Ontario property tax credit—in other words, anyone who owns or rents their own home and falls within the income parameters that I mentioned earlier—would be eligible. To qualify for relief under this legislation, people would have to file a 2005 personal income tax return on or before the end of 2006.

Discussions are currently under way with the Canada Revenue Agency for the delivery of this one-time payment. Delivery of the first cheques could begin as soon as the fall of 2006. The discussions with CRA to date have been very positive and encouraging about the capacity to implement this in a simple and easy fashion.

In addition to this particularly important new initiative, the Minister of Community and Social Services will soon be introducing legislation that would implement the second part of our April 12 announcement. Her legis-

lation would double the amount of funding for the emergency energy fund to some \$4.2 million. Of this new funding, \$500,000 will be specifically targeted for First Nations people living on-reserve. This fund helps social assistance recipients and other low-income households pay for utility arrears, security deposits and reconnection costs for electricity, hydro, natural gas, oils and other forms of energy when they find themselves in a crisis mode.

We're investing in the people of Ontario—and in their priorities, the things that matter most to them.

I'd like to spend just a few minutes showing how Bill 117 moves forward on our plan for Ontario, how it builds on our achievements over the previous years and positions us for a brighter tomorrow.

I'll start by focusing on our continued support for those who are the most vulnerable in our province. Initiatives that we introduced in the 2006 budget show the government's commitment to improve support for those who need it most. Our commitment includes:

- making permanent the flow-through of the July 2004, 2005 and 2006 increases to the national child benefit supplement;

- a 2% increase in social assistance rates for recipients of Ontario Works and the Ontario disability support program, in addition to the 3% increase in 2004-05;

- enrichment of the Ontario property and sales tax credits so that senior couples who receive the guaranteed minimum level of income from government would get the full benefit of those credits;

- additional support for at-risk youth by establishing the youth challenge fund, which will provide up to \$45 million in provincial and private sector funding to support community-led programs in Toronto that offer young people positive alternatives to guns and gangs;

- providing more than \$28 million in the first three years of a new youth opportunity strategy to expand employment and training programs and support the hiring of new outreach workers in at-risk communities across the province.

This is in part a response to the social and human deficit we inherited from the previous government. It's no less important than dealing with the health deficit, the education deficit, the infrastructure deficit or the more composite umbrella fiscal deficit.

In addition, we've made other key investments in developmental services, other supports for the vulnerable and affordable housing. A new Canada-Ontario affordable housing program agreement will result in an overall investment of \$734 million. The Ontario and federal governments will each provide \$301 million, with additional contributions from municipal governments.

Bill 117, proposing electricity relief for people with low incomes, is an important element of our overall plan for the province. It is coupled with one of the most ambitious building programs in North America for new electricity generation. Over the course of three years, this government has initiated dozens of projects to provide, together with other conservation efforts, about 11,000



megawatts of supply over the next five years. This is enough power for five million Ontario homes. Hydro One is investing more than \$3 billion over the next five years to sustain, expand and reinforce our transmission and distribution systems.

We've also announced a three-year extension of stable pricing for electricity provided by Ontario Power Generation. Our pricing policy has saved electricity consumers about \$740 million in 2005 alone.

The government is committed as well to creating a culture of conservation. Our goal is to achieve a 10% reduction in the government's electricity use by 2007, and we're encouraging consumers to reduce the use of electricity with the installation of 800,000 smart meters by 2007. I can tell you that we're well on our way to achieving those goals. Through new generation and conservation, the McGuinty government will keep the lights on.

The 2006 budget makes investments to support key sectors, including agriculture, forestry, culture, and research and innovation. These investments will strengthen Ontario's competitive advantage, boost economic growth and improve the quality of life for all Ontarians. Ensuring that all Ontarians can enjoy a high quality of life is important to our government. It's important to note that we're making these significant—groundbreaking, if you will—investments without introducing new taxes or any increases to the current ones.

But we have to continue planning for the medium and the longer terms. To that end, our government will continue to strengthen the economy through investments in post-secondary education, infrastructure, research and innovation, and key economic sectors, including a continued focus on education and training by government and business; better integration of new Canadians into the economy, including in high-skill, high-wage jobs; increasing research and innovation capacity; investing in the infrastructure of Ontario. A reliable, sustainable energy supply, a healthy business environment, ongoing fiscal discipline and managing health care costs are important parts of our overall plan and agenda.

I am very proud of our plan and the accomplishments we've achieved in the two and a half years that we've had the privilege to serve the people of Ontario as their government. We remain committed to Ontarians and we want every Ontarian to have the opportunity to succeed. That's why we're building opportunities for each and every one to reach their goals. I'm excited about our plan for the future, because ultimately it's a plan that will strengthen the province. It will strengthen its economy, its prosperity and the health of the people of Ontario, and the education and skills of the future generation.

In closing, Ontario will be at its best only when every Ontarian has the opportunity to achieve his or her full potential. The measures contained in Bill 117 provide some assistance—modest, admittedly, but important nonetheless—to people with low incomes as they seek to do what they must do every day of their lives: make the most of the opportunities available to them.

I'm going to ask the honourable members for their support for this program so we can move forward with our budget commitment to support those most vulnerable in our community to ensure that their lights stay on.

**The Acting Speaker:** Questions and comments?

1600

**Mr. Norm Miller (Parry Sound—Muskoka):** It's my pleasure to add comments. I would like first of all to welcome the member for Vaughan—King—Aurora back to his old job as Minister of Finance. Congratulations.

I would like to comment on Bill 117, An Act to amend the Income Tax Act to provide for an Ontario home electricity payment. Today is the first day I've seen it. What strikes me as a little strange about this bill is that it's one-time relief and it's pretty meagre relief: \$60 for a single person; \$120, one time, for a family.

I'm a little surprised that it is just for one time. It's based on the 2005 taxation year. I would have thought it might be a more efficient use of the Legislature's time to build in for next year's big increases in electricity prices and for the year after, with this government's plan of having a short-supply, high-priced electricity policy, particularly with the moving target that they've set for shutting down coal-fired generation. It was 2007, it's been switched to 2009, and there are a lot of qualifiers in there now. Hopefully the government is going to come to its senses and just set environmental targets, work to make those coal-fired generating stations as clean as possible and provide electricity at the most reasonable price possible for the province of Ontario.

Certainly I worry about what's going to happen, not only for consumers but for industries like the forestry sector, the pulp and paper sector and manufacturing that are really being hard hit. Of course, it affects people's livelihoods when a company goes out of business because they can't afford to pay the high electricity prices: There are no longer jobs available for the people of Ontario. That's what worries me a great deal with this government's electricity policies.

**Mr. Michael Prue (Beaches—East York):** I too would like to welcome the Minister of Finance back to his seat, in which I think he looks quite appropriate. You always looked a little bit out of place down at that end of the Legislature.

In any event, I listened to what he had to say about wanting to do more for "people with limited income." I think those were almost his exact words. I tried to write them down as he spoke. To use one of my favourite quotes from Socrates, "I would gladly be persuaded by you, sir, but not against my better judgment." I would be gladly persuaded that you were out to help people of limited income, even if it is only \$5 a month, which is the maximum that a single person is allowed under this bill, except that everything else that has happened in the whole issue of poverty in this province since the McGuinty government came to office has been a profound disappointment to me, because I honestly believed that things would be better than they were under the Harris Tories. I have to tell you I cannot say in all good conscience that you have delivered that to date.



We still have a clawback on those poor children who rely on funds from the federal government and who are not getting them. We still have, in your second budget, a freeze in payments to those on ODSP and Ontario Works, so that today, with 6% inflation, they're actually worse off than they were in the Harris times. We have an increase in energy costs. We have a health care premium that many of them have to pay. We have delisting of services. All of these have profoundly affected those of modest and low incomes. Anyone will thank you for \$5, and I'm sure there are people out there who will say that \$5 a month is going to help, but in the end it's very little and very late.

**Mrs. Liz Sandals (Guelph-Wellington):** I'm pleased to be able to respond to the speeches by the Minister of Finance—welcome back—and the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Finance on Bill 117, a bill to establish the Ontario home electricity relief program, which will provide some rebates for low-income Ontario families, because the McGuinty government recognizes that low-income families pay a higher percentage of their income to energy costs than some of us with higher incomes do. We realize that they're under the most pressure as hydro costs go up.

There were some comments here about the fact that while this really isn't very much—and I would like to put it into perspective—low-income families, which would be families up to a cut-off of \$35,000, depending on income could receive a maximum of a \$120 rebate. Individuals with a net income of less than \$20,000 a year would be entitled to some rebate, in this case up to \$60 in assistance. If you look at this, a family would be entitled to a maximum of \$10 per month. An individual living alone would be entitled to a maximum of up to \$5 a month.

I'd like to put that in perspective. When we looked at increasing hydro costs in Guelph, in my constituency, Guelph Hydro said that when you looked at the average family in Guelph, the average hydro bill in Guelph, it would increase by about \$6.80 a month. If that's reflective of an individual, the rebate is almost the entire cost; for a family, the whole cost.

**Mr. Jim Wilson (Simcoe-Grey):** I'd just say that only the Liberals would do it this way. You're going to give individuals up to \$60 and families up to \$120. Why don't you just cut their taxes rather than spending \$100 million, and God knows what extra you'll spend on hiring bureaucrats and cheque-printing machines and everything that's going to be required to get \$60 back to an individual? Why don't you just take them off the tax rolls, as we took some 800,000 people off the tax rolls when Mike Harris cut taxes in this province? They don't pay Ontario income tax anymore. Why don't you just do that and cut out the middlemen and the bureaucrats for a mere \$60, a one-time rebate? You'll gear up this whole program and you'll waste all kinds of money on administration for a pittance of, a fraction of their electricity.

The average family in Ontario earning \$62,000 pays over \$28,000 in federal and provincial taxes and GST and PST. That \$28,000 is more than they spend, by the

way, on lodging, electricity and food combined. So why don't you take that huge chunk of money you're taking from low-income people every year and just give them a tax cut, and forget the bureaucracy?

Again, hydro rates have gone up 55% since the McGuinty government came into office. They broke their promise to keep the cap on electricity. They were very, very clear, just like breaking the promise on, "I won't raise your taxes."

It's noble that you want to help low-income people, but you also broke your promise in only giving ODSP recipients and welfare recipients a 2% increase this year. You were going to bring the rates back to where they were when you were last in office, when one in 10 Ontarians was on welfare or social assistance in this province, a complete disgrace during booming times in the mid—

**The Acting Speaker:** The member from Pickering-Ajax-Uxbridge has two minutes to reply.

**Mr. Arthurs:** On behalf of myself and Minister Sorbara, I'm pleased to just add a couple of further comments and thank the members from Parry Sound-Muskoka, Beaches-East York, as well as from Guelph and Simcoe-Grey.

I know the member from Parry Sound-Muskoka was referencing the one-time support being kind of meagre. We have to put it in the full context: This is a \$100-million investment that will help some 1.5 million Ontarians who are in the greatest degree of need, as well as provide for a doubling of the emergency relief fund, for those who find themselves in a crisis mode, to support those where the need is absolutely the greatest at any given point in time.

The member from Beaches-East York is consistent in the context of what he has his focus on: those in the community, in the province, who suffer from a high degree of poverty. He reminds us of that, holds the government's feet to the fire over that on an ongoing basis. I think it's important to do that.

I referenced in my comments a kind of human and social deficit, and I would like to look at this as one piece of a larger puzzle and say, how are we dealing with that human deficit, that social deficit? What are all of the parameters we're trying to package under that? This is one piece of that. It doesn't meet all of the needs by any stretch of the imagination, but certainly increases to ODSP and increases to Ontario Works, and the stopping of the escalation on the clawback, are all pieces of those needs. If this can help in that way the most vulnerable as part of the package, I think it's legislation that is necessary and desirable.

I must say that I can't agree with the member from Simcoe-Grey that the solution is to return to the Mike Harris tax cut days. We know where that got us. That's why we're on the government side of the House and they're on the opposition side. People don't want to go back to the Mike Harris slash-and-burn tax cut approach to managing the province of Ontario or managing those who have needs in the province of Ontario. This is targeted to those who have the need: 1.5 million



Ontarians, a \$100-million investment this year. Ideally, if this legislation is adopted, we'd be able to roll it out and have it in their hands by the fall of this year.

1610

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr. Tim Hudak (Erie-Lincoln):** It's a pleasure to rise and speak on Bill 117, An Act to amend the Income Tax Act to provide for an Ontario home electricity payment, on its second reading.

Let me first say to the minister that I look forward to working with him. On a personal level, I want to commend the minister for his stamina and perseverance under some very difficult personal circumstances for the last number of months. I think he commands a high respect among all three parties here in the Ontario Legislative Assembly for his ongoing dedication to public service. I think we all know that when our personal reputations come under attack in public life, there's not much else left in public life, and it goes on to impact you in private life outside of public office. So I commend the minister for his courage in taking on this issue. I think he understands that the official opposition does have a role to play in ensuring that the government is held to account—

**Mr. Jeff Leal (Peterborough):** Like the Homestead Act.

**Mr. Hudak:** Well, we'll get to that.

I think all members of the assembly here this evening, on whatever side of the floor, were personally cheering for the minister and welcome him back to his position.

I have a number of comments on Bill 117. I think my colleagues from Parry Sound-Muskoka and Simcoe-Grey had some very important comments as well, which I'm going to reiterate as finance critic. I know my colleague the member from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke is looking forward, as the energy critic, to bringing forward a very coherent critique of the McGuinty government's energy policy to date, which is really at the root of Bill 117 and the reason why there is a refund bill before the House, which, while I think individuals will be happy to receive any money back from the McGuinty government, truly does not make up for the massive increase in hydro costs, taxes and user fees taking place in Dalton McGuinty's Ontario.

We cannot lose sight, I'll say again, that Bill 117 is here before the Legislative Assembly because of a botched hydro policy by the McGuinty government that just serves to drive hydro prices higher and higher every single year. I do note for the record, as my colleagues did as well, that this is simply a one-year payment, a bit of a one-year, ad hoc strategy to help out some individuals and some families in the province of Ontario. But we expect, as I think outside observers say nearly unanimously, that hydro rates will increase yet again in the years ahead because of the McGuinty government's hydro policy. So we wonder if we'll be seeing the son of 117 and the daughter of 117 after that, with other rebates. As my colleague from Simcoe-Grey has indicated, we would rather see a comprehensive and thoughtful energy

policy to actually increase energy supply in the province of Ontario than reduce it and drive up the rates that consumers pay.

I do want to note that the bill does contain a formula for how the rebate will be calculated, based on last year's income, up to December 31, 2005:

“\$60 – (0.01 × A)

“in which,

“‘A’ is the amount, if any, by which the individual's income exceeds \$14,000.”

While my colleagues on the government side say that low-income individuals will receive \$60 in relief, what they are neglecting to acknowledge is the formula in the bill, which sees a relatively steep reduction in that rebate as income increases.

Let me give you the rest of the scale, if you follow through with that factor. Individuals who have an income of \$16,000 will see \$40; incomes of \$18,000 or above will see a \$20 proposed relief; \$19,000 will receive 10 bucks total in relief from the Dalton McGuinty government; and as soon as you hit that magic \$20,000 in income, you get zero.

**Mr. Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre):** Rich folks.

**Mr. Hudak:** My colleague from Niagara Centre says they must think these are rich folk if they feel it should be eliminated at \$20,000 annual income.

An individual making \$20,000 a year is having one heck of a time making ends meet in Dalton McGuinty's Ontario. No doubt they aspire to higher wages and hopefully are trying to climb the ladder at the place in which they work. But if you see people with \$20,000 being described as having significant means, I think people who make \$20,000 a year would be shocked that the government considers them not worthy of a hydro rebate when they've seen hydro rates increase by some 55% under the Dalton McGuinty government. So let's be very careful: Those who are receiving \$60 maximum are those who make less than \$14,000 per year, and it's eliminated at the \$20,000 stage, which is certainly a very, very modest level of income for an individual, particularly in today's Ontario.

Reflecting on some of the articles that came out at the time of the latest rate increase by the McGuinty government, which was in mid-April down my way—I know my colleague the whip is here. Brantford, Niagara Falls, Midland and Welland will see increases, on average, of \$15 per month. Consumers of three other Ontario utilities—Grand Valley Energy near Orangeville; Haldimand County Hydro, which is part of my riding in the community of Dunnville; and Sioux Lookout Hydro in the northwest—could see bills rise by more than \$20 per month.

So if you get the maximum rebate living in one of those communities, the maximum you're going to benefit is up to three months, and if you are at a very modest income of \$18,000, you'll be lucky if you get one month's relief from the Dalton McGuinty hydro increases.

If I read these stories correctly, I believe the journalists are simply speaking about the increase in the price



of power; they're not reflecting the adjoining increases in transmission rates, distribution rates and the ongoing cost to retire hydro debt. Hopefully I'll get to that a bit later on. So the \$20-per-month increase my constituents in Dunnville are witnessing or my colleague from Kenora—Rainy River's constituents in Sioux Lookout are experiencing is probably far more than \$20 per month. That's just the latest increase, let alone the earlier increases by the Dalton McGuinty government.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I can tell by your rapt attention to my remarks that you are surprised that I have not yet—I almost got him to smile halfway. Oh, there we go. You're surprised that I have not yet mentioned Dalton McGuinty's ongoing broken promises. I know my friend the Minister of Health Promotion is wondering why it has taken me eight minutes to get to this point. He's right to remind me, and I should speak to that.

We remember in the campaign that Dalton McGuinty made a number of promises, many of which were targeted at these hard-working individuals and families who are really struggling to make ends meet at \$20,000 and find themselves getting no relief. Dalton McGuinty told those individuals, other working families and seniors in the province of Ontario that he would not raise their taxes. Shortly after taking office, the campaign promises were tossed out the window of the Premier's new limousine and he increased taxes substantially—in fact, to punishing levels—on working families and seniors in this province. Often overshadowed by that well-known broken promise was Dalton McGuinty's broken promise to hold hydro rates steady.

During the campaign, as Leader of the Opposition, Dalton McGuinty said he would maintain the freeze of 4.3 cents per kilowatt hour. Shortly after taking office, that promise too was kicked to the curb and he increased rates substantially and then did so again this past April. In fact, my colleague the energy critic for the Progressive Conservative caucus, John Yakabuski, has indicated it's a 55% cumulative increase to date in the price of power alone, let alone distribution, transmission etc. That's certainly an alarming increase, and far, far from Dalton McGuinty's campaign promise to freeze hydro rates.

So individuals will see a very, very modest amount of funding coming back to them, fully depleted as soon as they hit \$20,000 and up, which, whether you're living in Wellandport, you're living in Binbrook or you're living in the city of Toronto, doesn't get you very far.

**1620**

Working families—combined incomes of families, regardless of the number of children or users in the household—would see the proposed relief at \$120. But again, if you read the fine print of the bill, a similar formula exists. This formula is \$120 minus 0.01 times B, and B is the amount, if any, by which the individual's family income exceeds \$23,000. So again there's a sliding scale as family income increases, depleting the amount of funds that would flow through for this initiative. By way of example, if they made \$27,000, it would be \$80; at \$29,000, it's cut in half; and for

\$35,000 and up, it's gone entirely. Working families making \$35,000 per year, individuals making \$20,000 per year, senior citizens who are at that level of income, are not going to be impressed by this rebate.

Just think: We had our constituency week this past week. Members were in their ridings meeting with their constituents. I heard over and over again about the ongoing concern of individuals like these: hard-working Ontario residents, seniors counting on a decent, dignified retirement who can't make ends meet. On the way back to the city of Toronto for the resumption of the Legislature, gas prices this morning in the riding of Erie—Lincoln were 99 cents per litre. There has been concern in the media recently that it may go up as high as \$1.30 per litre this summer, depending on weather conditions. It's a strange world when people are celebrating gas at 96 cents per litre as a big break and go out of their way to fill up their tanks.

So not only have gas prices gone up, but hydro prices, as I've said, have increased some 55%, the price of power alone. Hydro bills are up substantially.

My colleague the member for Peterborough, who is a big fan of the Homestead Act, knows full well that skyrocketing property assessments across the province of Ontario under the McGuinty government are putting an even greater pressure on seniors and working families, in addition to gas prices, in addition to hydro prices.

We can't forget about the so-called health tax. And I say "so-called" because we all know that doesn't actually flow to health care; it flows to the consolidated revenue fund, the same place as money from the blackjack tables at Casino Niagara, or from the gas taxes that we're all getting rather tired of paying when we're seeing about \$1 a litre at the pumps.

Let me add to that list. At the same time that the so-called health tax was brought in, which some have called the mother of all broken promises, chiropractic care, physiotherapy and optician care were all delisted, effectively making two-tier care. If you have the wherewithal, the financial resources, you could continue to pay for those services, but I know that many of my constituents, and I expect many of yours, many of those of my colleagues across the way, can no longer afford to visit their chiropractor, their physiotherapist or their optician as they had in the past. So new user fees are similarly taking a chunk out of the pockets of working families and seniors in the province of Ontario.

We're even seeing in the health care sector pressure for hospitals to increase fees that they charge, whether it's for parking or ancillary services to health care. Of course, they can't charge, under the Public Health Act, for their health care services directly, but they find other ways of raising fees on patients. As a result, approximately \$2,000 more per year is coming out of the pockets of working families in the province of Ontario since Dalton McGuinty came to office in the fall of 2003, much of it because of Dalton McGuinty's broken promises.

So it's always interesting to see a rebate. I think any relief from Dalton McGuinty is a bit of a surprise,



because he seems to be dramatically out of touch with the plight of working families in the province of Ontario and that of seniors. But when you compare it to the \$2,000 increase in costs experienced by families in Ontario, and seniors getting \$20 back, if you make \$18,000 a year as a single individual, it's not going to impress them very much, as Shania Twain said. I always wanted to work her into one of my speeches, and I just did so: "That don't impress me much." What else can I say? "Come on over; come on in," would be a good one in terms of tourism, trying to get the Americans back. But I digress.

Nonetheless, the cut-offs at a relatively low rate of income will not impress seniors, will not impress taxpayers in Ontario. We wish this was something more than a political effort. We wish it was actually some sort of fervour, some commitment, some fever for helping out working families and seniors in the province by providing some real relief. But I suspect this is just a way for the government to try to ease the criticism for their ongoing broken promise surrounding hydro rates. In fact, I suspect there was a bit of a last-minute scramble in mid-April. It was April 11, April 12, when there was some publicity about the new rate increases. They made it a 55% increase in hydro rates. The government scrambled and said, "Goodness, what are we going to do? Another hit, another reminder of our broken promises," and I think they then cobbled together this rebate program.

The reason I say that is because this was shortly after the most recent provincial budget. If I read this correctly, this was not part of the budget. This is not a budgeted initiative; this is money the government will have to find somewhere else. If this had been planned, if this was a sincere commitment to assist seniors, low-income individuals and low-income families, then it would have been a budgeted item. We would have heard about it ahead of time, instead of some sort of last-minute scramble to try to change the direction of the negative press.

Secondly, it's not an ongoing real strategy. This will be, if I understand correctly, a one-off and the government would have to bring in subsequent bills in other years. I wouldn't be surprised if they did. I suspect they will increase hydro prices yet again before the next election, and I suspect they will cobble together some other way of trying to divert the negative publicity that they deserve, but I don't think taxpayers are going to be fooled by that.

The old finance minister is new again. Hopefully, we'll see a greater commitment from him to fiscal transparency and ensuring that initiatives like this are actually budgeted items. We all know about the extra \$3 billion, the so-called slush fund that the previous finance minister, now the Minister of Energy, got outdoors as quickly as he could in the last couple of weeks of the fiscal year. I think the only limit on the amount of money that Minister Duncan was spending was his physical capacity for signing cheques.

**Hon. Jim Watson (Minister of Health Promotion):** Jim Flaherty did that.

**Mr. Hudak:** My colleague says that Minister Flaherty did that. Minister Flaherty also made a significant down

payment on the debt of \$3 billion, increased transfers to the province and had a surplus budget as well. Seeing the minister go on a massive spending spree so he could run a deficit was a rather odd situation to behold. He had some good publicity in the Sun on the weekend—

**Hon. Mr. Watson:** The Star.

**Mr. Hudak:** Sorry, the Star on the weekend, and a nice picture as well. We should, on the record, wish the member a happy birthday, which was just last week, according to the article. Some of us feel bad that we missed it. So we will, on the record, wish him a very happy birthday, which I think is 37. He's done well for a young fellow; no doubt about it.

But the minister is trying to distract me from some very important points here, I suspect. The fact of the matter is that the previous Minister of Finance went on a massive end-of-year spending spree, spent some \$3 billion, decided not to balance the budget and intentionally ran a deficit. He created some trust fund accounts, more or less, for projects that did not have a municipal or federal commitment at the same time in order to run a deficit. I will say this again: I do think that this undermines our case with the federal government. We certainly would like to see this Premier be successful in achieving a better deal for Ontario from the federal government, but when you go on that kind of massive spending spree, which equated to a 9.2% increase in program spending, much of which was in the last couple weeks of the year, it really undermines Ontario's case with the federal government and I think hurts our case with the other provinces. You're probably more successful if you have allies in the other provinces. It's almost like the image of a man going out and buying a new suit, shiny new shoes and a new hat and going new-cap-in-hand to Ottawa begging for more money.

I hope we'll see a change in that tone from the new Minister of Finance, Minister Sorbara, for greater fiscal transparency, to make sure that if they do items like Bill 117, indeed they will be clearly budgeted items so we could have some glimpse that the government truly does have a plan on the hydro front. But I suspect they don't, and this was nothing but last-minute ad hockery.

As I said, my colleague Mr. Yakabuski will be speaking later on to this bill. He will bring a very effective and cogent critique of the government's hydro policy so I won't belabour those points.

1630

**Hon. James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, Government House Leader):** You're very optimistic here, assuming that.

**Mr. Hudak:** To my friend the Minister of Tourism, I've enjoyed Mr. Yakabuski's remarks. I think he has an outstanding handle on this file and I look forward to his withering critique of current government policy on the hydro file.

I'll just add a couple of points from my own personal view on hydro and defer to our critic for a much more comprehensive critique of the hydro policy. I do worry that the government is effectively recreating the old



Ontario Hydro. I don't think there were too many who were satisfied with the old Ontario Hydro—at the end of the day, a creaking monolithic structure that was not delivering quality service, that was putting pressure for rates to increase year after year. I think the predecessor government, the NDP, attempted to address that. We brought forward measures to address that. But I believe the current government, which is a bit over a barrel when it comes to hydro supply because of its misguided policy to close the coal generating plants by 2007, has effectively recreated Ontario Hydro because it is signing one-off, oft-times sweetheart deals with suppliers. Suppliers are very wise. They know how to play the game. They negotiate in many different jurisdictions and if they see a government that has said it's going to close off 28% of its supply by 2007—that promise has been broken for Nanticoke; it's now 2009, but these types of time frames—they know they have the government over a barrel and are therefore able to negotiate sweetheart contracts that are effectively locking in Ontario consumers to very high prices for a very long period of time.

In reality, market commentators are saying that the hydro market is effectively dead and we're moving more toward the McGuinty government's world of high-priced, single-sourced contracts that mean that this increase that we've seen to date, the 55% increase, is a mere walk in the park compared to what is going to be coming down the road.

I've expressed this before on committee and I've expressed it in the Legislature, that I, as the MPP for Erie—Lincoln, have great concern about the government's so-called plan to eliminate the coal-fired plants by 2007 and Nanticoke by 2009. I think that nobody on that side actually believes they're going to do that. There is much speculation that they'll be climbing away from that promise and breaking it in the very near future. I think hydro consumers and hydro suppliers would appreciate it if there was an honest admission by the government that their promise was unrealistic to begin with, that they really had no intention of keeping it and put us on a more solid footing for the supply of power.

I find it regrettable as well that this government refuses to investigate, even in the least, the concept of clean coal technology—clean coal technology that we're seeing embraced and utilized in other provinces, in the United States and in Europe. Often the government would say that Europe is far more advanced than we are on clean fuel initiatives. Clean coal technology is abundant in European countries, but this government, I think because they're worried about admitting another broken promise after so many, refuses to investigate clean coal technology's potential benefits to our supply system and to our ability to clean up the environment.

The other problem with dragging out this ill-conceived coal closure plan for so long, this last straw that the drowning credibility of the McGuinty government is grasping at, is that it has meant that the coal plants have continued to emit into our atmosphere with no improvements in the technology at the existing plants. In fact,

they're letting the infrastructure deteriorate there. So if initiatives had been taken much earlier to try to clean up those plants, we'd be in a much better situation today than we find ourselves in, again because of Dalton McGuinty's broken promises, which I don't think he intended to keep in the first place.

My last two points: the substitution of natural gas. The dependency the government seems hell-bent to achieve on natural gas supplies is going to have some impacts on consumers. Many homes will use natural gas for their home heating. We've already seen home heating costs go up in the province of Ontario and there's been significant concern expressed that if government intends to gobble up more and more of the natural gas supply, that means that those home heating costs will increase even more than they have to date under the McGuinty government.

Secondly, natural gas is an important feedstock for the chemical industry. I know my colleagues from Sarnia and Lambton will be very concerned about the ongoing viability of the petrochemical industry in that part of the province, among others. If natural gas is taken out of the feedstock line, the prices increase substantially. That's going to put in jeopardy even more jobs in that important sector.

The Power Workers' Union as well makes an important point. I hope that during debate we'll have some response on this to indicate that despite many years of having the debt retirement charge for the stranded assets in place, under the McGuinty government we've actually seen an increase in the debt. If my information is old or out of date, I would appreciate being updated on that, but I think not only the Power Workers' Union but consumers facing higher and higher bills under the McGuinty government must be very puzzled about the increase in hydro debt when they've been promised that it would be actually going down and heading in the opposite direction.

That will conclude my remarks on Bill 117 for the time being. I look forward to comments from my colleagues. I hope that I will be proved incorrect and that this is a sign that the McGuinty government is finally understanding the plight of working families and seniors in Ontario, but I suspect Bill 117 is all about a short-term, ad hoc political solution to negative publicity as opposed to any real commitment to helping working families, low-income individuals or seniors in Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker:** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Kormos:** I was pleased to listen carefully to the comments of the member for Erie—Lincoln. I regret that he ended his commentary, his participation, a few minutes earlier than he need have, but I do know that he's going down to Niagara. Tonight is the night that we honour volunteers with five-year, 10-year, 15-year pins, and I'm counting on him to bring my greetings to those folks down there.

**Hon. Mr. Bradley:** And mine.

**Mr. Kormos:** And Jim Bradley's. There are three of us here from Niagara—a Tory, a Liberal and a New Democrat—and at least two of us have to be here at any



given point in time just to keep the appropriate momentum and the homeostasis that is created by this tripartite arrangement.

Michael Prue is going to be speaking to the bill in just a few minutes' time and Michael Prue is going to expose this as the rather cheap taxpayer-funded publicity stunt that it is. It's all about sending out the cheques in the fall, and preferably late fall, as close to pre-Christmas as possible, and the fact is that there isn't much relief here at all. The relief, I say to you, is negligible for electricity consumers whacked—what, May 1, 2006, Mr. Prue?—with another 15% on electricity rates that are already skyrocketing with the Liberals' ill-conceived privatization agenda to take care of their Bay Street buddies, their profiteering friends—the profiteers, the privateers and the Bay Street pirates. Who pays for that? Consumers pay for that: hardworking folks like down where I come from, places like Welland, Thorold, Pelham, Thorold South, Port Colborne, Waynefleet and St. Catharines. Those folks pay, and they pay and pay and pay.

**Mr. Arthurs:** I listened carefully as well to the member from Erie–Lincoln. I always appreciate the comments from the official opposition. I always look for the right word, though, to describe my feeling as I'm hearing them speak. The best one I can think of is "rich." What I hear from the official opposition is really rich when they talk about low-income individuals, those who are vulnerable, and seniors. This is from the party that didn't allow for an increase in the minimum wage in eight years, the party that slashed social assistance to the most vulnerable. So I have a little difficulty sometimes with that take.

I just want to make a couple comments. You have to remember that this is building on something of a broader agenda, where we're doubling an emergency relief program we put in place for those in crisis mode. That's being doubled, and there's \$100 million for relief to some 1.5 million Ontarians. We're putting it together, and it means that it will allow the money to flow into their hands in a structured fashion, using a bureaucratic structure that is already in place, the Canadian revenue agency. We're not creating a new one for this purpose; we're effectively piggybacking on an opportunity for efficiencies in that regard.

1640

The member from Erie–Lincoln spoke to a fair extent about the capacity to fund some other activity at year-end. I'm always curious when I hear the opposition speak to that matter. What are the kinds of things that they would prefer we weren't doing? Would it be infrastructure in the province of Ontario? Should we not be trying to fund roads and bridges for the economy and prosperity? Maybe we shouldn't be, when we have some capacity, funding guns-and-gangs initiatives to bring those under control. Maybe we shouldn't send as much money in that direction. Or maybe youth-at-risk opportunities—maybe we shouldn't have used some the dollars available for that purpose. Those are choices. We're focused on those who are vulnerable and with need in our community, and this legislation is all part of that.

**Mr. Wilson:** I listened quite carefully to the remarks of my colleague from Erie–Lincoln. I think he hit the nail on the head on quite a few points—also the member for Niagara Centre, Mr. Kormos, in terms of what he said. This thing is just a sham. We took 800,000 people off the tax rolls when we did tax cuts under the Mike Harris government. That was 800,000 people who were paying provincial income tax and shouldn't have been paying, because they weren't making enough money.

Now you're going to build this huge bureaucracy to put forward this \$100-million program to give people back their own money that you shouldn't have taken in the first place. One of the rebates to individuals here goes from \$60 down to zero; if you start to make over \$20,000, you get zero. You're actually going to send people who make \$19,000 a cheque for \$10. Do you know how much money you're going to spend processing a cheque for \$10? It's the most ridiculous thing I've ever heard. Why don't you just cut people's taxes? You won't do it because you criticized us when we created 1.3 million net new jobs in the province of Ontario. We gave people a hand up. We took almost a million people off welfare and they got jobs in the province.

You believe your own rhetoric rather than the facts, and you refuse to acknowledge that people in Ontario are still overtaxed. If you want to give low-income people a break, take them off the tax rolls. Don't spend all this money on bureaucracy—Liberals love to build bureaucracy—just to give them back 10 bucks or less. It's absolutely ridiculous. And according to this bill, you have to fill out an income tax form in order to get it. You're not even going to get near the poor in this province. They don't pay taxes, folks. They don't fill out income tax forms. They won't get this rebate. So don't get give me any corner-on-compassion Liberal crap. This is a horrible sham. It's a horrible sham.

**Mr. Prue:** I listened intently to the first part of the speech of my friend from Erie–Lincoln and I got here in time for the last part. He did something which I have never seen him do before, and that is finish before his hour was up. I want to commend him for that.

But a couple of things he had to say—and I have to agree with the member from Pickering–Ajax–Uxbridge when he talked about low-income people. Quite frankly, the disparity of low-income people versus those with the highest income, the quintile at the top and the quintile at the bottom, grew very large during the time that the Conservatives were in government. That should be no surprise to anyone, when social welfare rates were cut, when ODSP was frozen, when all those things happened during that time. Although it was a time of some significant economic prosperity, it's not strange to see how those who made more money, those who were better off, tended to do well, and those who were at the bottom tended to do worse. The gap between the rich and poor actually was exacerbated; it was made worse.

So when I listened to this about the low-income and saying what isn't being done, I have to take that with a



little grain of salt. I do have to agree with him, though, on the tax rolls. This is a scheme that is going to be hard, it's going to be expensive, it's not going to deal with the very poor people we're trying to reach. It's not going to deal with those who do not get monies back on their housing. When you file income tax, if you're not getting money back either for rent or the cost of housing, you're not going to be included. In my own speech, I'm going to talk about some of those people, whether they be the old and infirm, the in-laws living in the house, the disabled children—those are all going to be missed under this scheme, and they ought not to be.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member from Erie–Lincoln has two minutes to reply.

**Mr. Hudak:** I appreciate the comments by my colleagues. I will, of course, bring regrets and congratulations to the hard-working volunteers in Niagara on behalf of my colleagues from Niagara Centre and St. Catharines. I suspect that my colleague from Niagara Falls is probably there tonight.

I'm now sensitive to my colleague from Beaches, that I cut—

**Mr. Prue:** I may do the same thing.

**Mr. Hudak:** Oh, that's why. Don't get used to it. Maybe I can make up time next time around.

The member from Simcoe–Grey put it quite well, I think: The best way to help out low-income individuals and working families is to improve their economic wherewithal. Under the Mike Harris government, we saw some 800,000 people off the tax rolls altogether by eliminating the provincial tax that they pay. I think there's some progress, finally, on the federal side in that respect, and I hope that they will continue.

Secondly, we saw the biggest increase in jobs in the history of the province of Ontario, where Ontario led all other North American jurisdictions in job creation and economic growth, which is a very, very positive comparison to what we see in the province today, where Ontario is regularly near the bottom in job creation relative to the other provinces, let alone the United States.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Hudak:** No, it's true. Our job creation rate is among the lowest. In fact, the Bank of Nova Scotia has just projected that Ontario's economic growth will be the lowest in all of Canada, and Toronto-Dominion has said that we'll be the second-lowest in growth rates in all of Canada.

I hope this bill does go to committee. I'd like to better understand the mechanism. My colleagues have brought up some important points about how the cheques will be cut—the expenses of the program. I suspect that the government is moving away from rebates on the bills themselves because they feel they didn't get the political hit, and invented this new animal.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr. Prue:** I had a look at the bill for the first time this morning. I had a look at the bill and tried to discover what was in it.

At first, there's this big promise that there's going to be a rebate for the poor. You think, "My goodness, I'm really going to support this bill. I really am looking forward to what's in there." That was my first reaction.

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Prue:** No, because I thought that finally, after three years of this government, they're starting to turn their attention where they promised to turn it in the first place. I remember those days. I remember, in the lead-up to the election, all the talk. I remember all of the promises, but the ones that were dearest to my heart, I have to tell you quite frankly, were the promises related to poor people in this province, in our community and our city and all of the places that we see them. I had hope for those children who are having their monies clawed back. I had hope for those people on ODSP who hadn't had an increase in eight years. I had hope for those on general welfare who are struggling and saw their monies cut, and quite frankly live in an abysmal poverty that no one in this room probably has ever experienced or would want to experience.

Some of us were invited, and some of us actually went out and stayed for a night or two nights in places like Jane-Finch, where I stayed with my former colleague the member from Toronto–Danforth, Marilyn Churley, and went around and viewed the situation of poverty—not so much just not having the money but the despair, the lack of any sort of hope that the young people had—and saw the food that was eaten and to see the conditions in which people lived.

My mind went back to that time three years ago when we were starting in on an election in the summertime. There were a lot of things being said, and I had hoped and hoped and hoped that this government would be doing something about it.

So when I opened up the bill and I saw the title, I thought, "Something's going to be done." But the reality is that this is a tiny bill of limited proportion. I don't know how else to describe it: a tiny bill of limited proportion. In the end, what it's going to do—if you are poor enough, if you are unfortunate enough in this society to earn \$14,000 a year or less, you get a maximum of \$60. Think about that. Think about what that involves: five dollars a month, or about 15 or 16 cents a day. That's what this government is going to give back to our poorest citizens who are in some considerable economic constraint: 16 cents. What can you buy with 16 cents every day? Even if you amass it for a whole year, what can you buy for \$60?

1650

I question the purport of the bill. What does it do? It gives somebody \$5 a month, if you're lucky, and less if you make more than \$14,000. But that's all it does. It does not regulate the prices of electricity; it does not regulate the prices of commodities that people use every day in order to get around, be it in a car or on public transportation; it does not regulate the price that they pay for food; it does not regulate any of the prices on which they are so very reliant. It does not cap the price of



electricity, which this government ran on in the last election. I remember being on television and arguing this very point in a couple of televised debates about where we were going with electricity rates. I have to tell you that a couple of people now sitting on this side tried to beat me up pretty badly because what I said then, and I think what you have come to realize now, is that it's a mug's game to promise to regulate the prices at lower than it costs to produce the electricity. But that was your position. My position was that you have to keep it as cheap as possible but you have to pay the actual cost, or in the end you are going to end up increasing and increasing the debt.

The Liberals were very good. They were going to freeze it at 4.3 cents; there was going to be no increase. I will tell you, more than a few people who might have voted for me or for our party voted for you based on the 4.3 cents. That's what you promised. I cannot go back, even for a moment, even though I knew that it was impossible for you to do it, without reminding you that you made a promise that I do not believe you ever intended or had the foresight to keep.

I am also looking at this bill about electricity in terms of the proliferation of the obscene wages that we are giving in this province to senior executives. I say "obscene wages" when I look at the \$200,000, \$300,000, \$400,000 a year that some of the people are making in the electricity industry. The former minister, the one who has now gone to transportation, stood up and said that, yes, she was going to discuss it with the boards of directors, but in the end was probably not going to do anything. I don't think she ever did anything and I don't think the new Minister of Energy is ever going to do anything about these obscene wages. That would mean a whole bunch to people if they could see that senior executives were not going to be treated in this kind of way, but this government lets those costs run rampant, so that people make hundreds of thousands of dollars with perks, and it's all added on to the little people who can scarcely afford to keep the lights on.

I looked in the bill too, because it had the word "electricity" in it, to see if it would stop the exponential growth of all the government agencies. Ontario Hydro used to run it all. Remember, we deregulated and now we have eight companies that each have their own executives, with huge salaries, running around doing what one agency used to do before, and I think at considerably more cost. You have to question why there is nothing in this bill that will rein in those costs, which would help the very poor people.

What have we got? We've got a tax credit based on income. This is not a credit based on usage. Stop and think about this for a few minutes. You earn \$14,000 or less per year; the government magnanimously gives you five bucks per month. You earn such a pittance of an amount, you take home such a pittance of an amount, and you get \$5. You don't even have to be an electricity user to get this money. So I question the bill, I question the title of the bill and the purport of the bill, and I question

what the minister and the parliamentary assistant had to say, because this has virtually nothing to do with electricity. This is a mere acknowledgment that people are suffering, that people who earn \$14,000 or less a year are suffering, and that the government wants to make sure that they get five extra dollars a month to ease that suffering. But it has nothing to do with electricity. You don't even have to have a light bulb in your house, you don't have to have electricity at all, you don't have to use electricity at all; you can still get this money.

On the converse, you can use too much electricity—not that I think there are many people at \$14,000 a year using too much, because it would be a mug's game, a fool's game to get into that, burning the lights and the electricity, using electric heat and all those things, if you only have \$14,000. But you could use huge amounts and you could be a waste hog—that's the converse—and you would still only get the same \$5 a month. It has nothing whatsoever to do with electricity. The reality is that it is a maximum \$60 per year credit if you earn less than \$14,000.

Who are those people who earn less than \$14,000? Unfortunately, there are all too many of them. It's every single person in this province who works 40 hours a week and is on minimum wage. It is every single one of them. It is every single person on Ontarians with disabilities. It is every single person on Ontario Works. It is every single person whose pension has not kept up with inflation and/or who only receives the old age pension and/or the supplement. Those are the people we are talking about—hundreds of thousands, potentially millions of Ontarians. These are the people who are going to earn this kind of money and to whom the \$5 a month is going to be given.

This magnanimous payout of \$5 a month declines by 1%, or \$1, with every \$100 you make above \$14,000. That's \$1 per year, and it goes down. If you make \$14,000, you get 60 bucks; if you make \$20,000, you get nothing. So for every \$100 you make above \$14,000, you lose \$1. It goes down to \$59 at \$14,100 and so on, because it's phased right out. What you're dealing with here is a whole range of people who earn maybe the huge sum of \$10 an hour. They will be phased out by the time they get to \$10. I want to tell you that even at \$10 an hour, you're living at the poverty level, and this bill will make sure that you stay there.

I went on to look at who is going to get the money. It's based on the property tax credit. If you do not get a property tax credit, you will not get any money whatsoever. I stopped to think about who is eligible for the property tax credit. Anyone who owns a property and anyone who rents a property is eligible for that tax credit. But what about—and let's start thinking about whether these people need the money too—the stay-at-home son or daughter who is on ODSP, who has special needs and may be an adult? Do these people qualify for any kind of rebate? They do not, not under this. They do not get a property tax rebate because they are not the owner and they are not the renter. What about the older adult who is staying at home with their son or daughter? One spouse



is deceased and you move into the in-law apartment and you live with your family. You don't pay them rent and therefore you're not eligible to claim this either. You would be continuing to live in poverty. You may even make less than \$14,000 a year. You will be a drain on the electricity coming into the house because you will be using your proportionate share as well, and you will not be eligible under this scheme of the government to get a cent.

That's what this government has done. You have left out hundreds of thousands of people, be they children, be they disabled people who live at home, special-needs children, elderly parents. You have left them all out in one fell swoop. I would think it would have been a whole lot better—and I would suggest that you look at it and that you should have looked at it earlier—to include it. If you intend to make sure that elderly people, disabled sons and daughters and kids at home who are not employed or employable are eligible as well, you should have done it through the income tax scheme and not just on the property tax credit, because in reality you're giving them nothing.

1700

I think this was done by the government because it's very simple to administer. You just pull all the people out on the computer who got a property tax credit in Ontario and those are the people who are eligible for a form of the rebate. You can do the calculation on the computer in a matter of minutes. You can send out the cheque at considerable cost some time in the fall or winter or, even better, some time next year, because it's election year. "Here's your money from the Ontario government. We're listening to you poor people and we understand. Here's your \$30 or \$40," or "You're really lucky, here's your \$60, and remember us at election time."

I don't want to be cynical, but I have to tell you, every time governments send out cheques like this, the calls come to my office—I'm sure they come to all your offices—"Is my cheque in the mail? I'm looking for my cheque." They're very poor. They want the money and they are beholden for it.

I will tell you, it's simple to administer, but again, it is extremely flawed because it leaves out too many people.

Had you really, truly, honestly believed that this was the best thing to do—thinking about this, knowing your own energy policy for a year—it would have been far better had this been done at the time of the last budget debate. It should have been included in there so that it could have been included in the income tax provisions, so that the monies could have been taken out better and rebated instantly to those who were going to be the subject of this government largesse.

If you had had the foresight, people would have already got their refunds, but because that hasn't happened, they are going to have to wait, in some cases I think for five or six months, if they're particularly lucky, and more likely until next year. But there is also the added costs. I have no idea what the costs are to the province of Ontario to issue a cheque. I do know that

when I was mayor of East York, it cost us a couple of dollars, \$2 or \$3, to issue a cheque. It just wasn't the cheque itself, but it was all of the administrative work. It was hiring the people to check and recheck before cheques were made out, and all of the accounting that had to be done. It was calculated at that time, some eight, 10 years ago now, that it cost us \$2 or \$3 for every cheque we wrote. Therefore, we were reluctant to write cheques that were less than \$2 or \$3, because it was costing more than the money was worth. The same thing is true of taking money in. When you took it in that way, it cost a lot to administer those cheques, especially if some of them ended up bouncing. This is a whole, huge enterprise for what is a minuscule tax reduction of some scant \$5 a month. Who needs this?

I want to talk a little bit about poverty for a moment because this past week was very disturbing to me. I've talked about poverty very often in this Legislature. You've heard some of my speeches. You've heard the speeches about kids and the clawback, about those on ODSP, about general welfare. You've heard the speeches about Jane-Finch and the people who live in our crumbling inner cities and the huge problems that are resulting from that, including the problems of violence. But this last week —

**Mr. Kormos:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: Is there a quorum present?

**The Acting Speaker:** Is there a quorum present?

**The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Lisa Freedman):** A quorum is not present, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker:** A quorum is not present. We'll call in the members for five minutes.

*The Acting Speaker ordered the bells rung.*

**The Clerk-at-the-Table:** Quorum is now present, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker:** A quorum being present, I recognize the member to continue his remarks.

**Mr. Prue:** It was a little opportunity to rest there. I always think that my speeches might be a little more riveting and draw more attention and bring in a bigger crowd than perhaps what is here this afternoon.

In any event, I had an opportunity to go with my colleague Gilles Bisson into his riding. He invited me to go up the coast, James Bay and Hudson's Bay, to look at the poverty situation of our First Nations people. I have to tell you, what I saw there was extremely, extremely disturbing. If you want to know about this bill and how it's going to help them, I don't think it will either.

I just want to talk about three communities we had an opportunity to visit. The first one was Peawanuck, which is near Polar Bear park on Hudson's Bay. It's one of the furthest northern communities in Ontario, save and except, I believe, for Fort Severn. We had an opportunity to look at Attawapiskat, which is kind of in sad shape because the public high school, which administers the whole region of Hudson's Bay, has been closed now for, I think, six years and has not been opened, and the community is reeling. Last but not least, we had an opportunity to go to Kashechewan to see what is happening in that particular community. You will remember



them: They are the ones with the water troubles. You will remember the evacuation by the Ontario government, and you will remember that just a few weeks or months ago they were flooded out. The community is virtually a ghost town. We had an opportunity to go there.

I want to talk about one particular individual in Peawanuck—I sat with member Gilles Bisson from Timmins—James Bay at his kitchen table. The man was legally blind. He had worked, but had been on ODSP now for a number of years. He was a father with five children. One was in high school; four were in the home. His ODSP had been reduced by the Ontario government because, in that place that has no high school and has a public school up to grade 8, his son had not wanted to go away. There's no work to do, but he did not want to go away and leave his family and his blind father, so he was at home. His ODSP was reduced by this government. This government determined, because he wasn't in school and there's no school in the community, that the family was no longer in any way eligible to get the money.

As I said, the man was legally blind. He was unable to work. The band had helped him as much as they could, but the overwhelming difficulty that he had wasn't the house; it wasn't being blind; it was the sheer cost of energy. Even though this is the responsibility of the federal government, the energy is still important and is as necessary to him as it is to us here in southern Ontario. The energy costs to him were, I think, exorbitant. I don't know whether he's eligible under this bill, because if this bill is really to do with energy, Ontario doesn't provide energy to that community. The federal government pays somebody from Winnipeg to produce the energy through a diesel generator. The cost of the energy, when I asked him, made Ontario actually look kind of good, because the cost of the energy there is eight cents for the first couple of hundred kilowatts, and then it goes up to 16 cents for the next couple of hundred kilowatts, and then to 32 cents and finally to 64. So if you use a lot of energy—and this is a man with five kids. I didn't look around the house, but I'm sure he had a television. I would hope so. The other kinds of energy that you would need for your refrigerator, for your stove—he could be paying up to 64 cents per kilowatt hour, and I'm not sure that he would be eligible under this bill. I'd like someone to look into that, as to whether or not he could get a rebate of \$5 a month, or \$10 for his family.

The poverty there was mind-numbing. I think about everything that this province can do. I know, when questions get asked about First Nations communities, when they get asked about our aboriginal peoples, that there is a natural tendency on the side of government to say, "This is not our responsibility. This is a federal responsibility." I believe we have to get beyond that. We have to get beyond that and to ensure that this bill works for those people and that we do much more for them in terms of the poverty and the isolation in which they live.

1710

I invite the members to go up to those communities and take a look, if you've never seen them. Take a look

at the cost of living. Go into the Northern Stores, as I did in Attawapiskat. We had a few minutes, and I went in to look at a bag of potatoes. A bag of potatoes to feed your family was \$29.98. I'll repeat that, in case you think I made a mistake: \$29.98. That's in Attawapiskat, population of a couple of thousand, no school. If you want potatoes with your meal, you'll pay that, or else you'll do without. If you want anything else that you can see in there—there's a bag of milk for \$12 or ice cream for \$12, things that we in southern Ontario can pay a couple of dollars for, \$3 if it's not on sale. You will see that the cost of living is extraordinary up there, and you will know that those people get the same social welfare rates. When I asked him, he gets the same social welfare rates in Peawanuck or in Attawapiskat or in Kashechewan as we get in southern Ontario, yet the costs are hugely, hugely more, including, most importantly, the cost of electricity.

I don't believe this bill in any way looks after what was observed there. We promised to help the man, and I hope a little speech in the Legislature about his life and about ODSP and cutting it back so that his son could stay at home and wouldn't have to go to school in Timmins, some four hours away by plane—that's the option so that he could continue to get some money from ODSP for his son. I think the son was far more important to the blind father in Peawanuck than he was, sadly to say, missing school in Timmins. Certainly the son felt that was the importance and the duty and what he wanted to do. I can empathize with that, even though I know in the long term every child is better off getting a good education. In the short term, really he was doing what he thought was best for his family.

You know, this is a province with unlimited resources, with huge amounts of capital, with lots of potential. People are not able to look to that potential because, I would suggest, the energy policy has failed far too many of them. As we look across northern Ontario, we can see the energy policy has failed those who work in paper mills and in pulp mills and in the mining sector, but particularly in paper and pulp mills, where far too many of them have closed down. You see towns like Smooth Rock Falls reeling, and Kenora and Rainy River, and all of the places with the energy policy and the elevated costs driving them literally out of business. The OEB, the Ontario Energy Board, has just approved a 15% increase on general energy rates—

**Mr. Kormos:** That's incredible.

**Mr. Prue:** Incredible—on May 1. I don't know what kind of effect that is going to have on those mills, but I will tell you how much of an effect that is going to have on ordinary people. This bill purports to give \$5 to an individual, and it will almost cover, as the member from Guelph-Wellington said—will almost cover—the cost of the electricity increase from May 1, and it will just about cover, if you get the whole \$10 for a family, a family's electricity use for what happened on May 1. But what about the other costs? This is only the latest cost increase above 4.3 cents, which the Liberals campaigned would not be raised. This is only the newest. This is only the



last iteration. This is it. This is the newest one. You know, the regulated price as of May 1, 2006, will be 5.8 cents up to the threshold, and it will be 6.7 cents after that.

What is the threshold? The threshold is pretty minor. The threshold in the summer, when the usage is the highest—that is, from May to October—is a scant 600 kilowatt hours per month. I think people know that the use of 600 kilowatt hours per month is not a whole lot, and that's what this is all about. If you use more than 600, you're going up to 6.7 cents. If you think about that in real terms, 4.3 was what was promised; 6.7 is where you're going to be at as of May 1. So if you are a person who has a meagre, meagre income, you can look to see some of that back, but if you earn above \$20,000 a year, which is at the poverty line—that's where the poverty line is, around \$21,000 a year. If you live at or near the poverty line, you'll end up getting nothing, but you will see the cost of your energy going through the roof, from 4.3 to 6.7. If you do the math, that's about a 50% increase that is taking place, in spite of the many protestations from the government opposite during the time of the last election that they were going to cap the electricity rates at 4.3 cents.

Just to go back to that election, I've already talked about that for a moment, but this needs to be reinforced. Governments, in my view, need to have credibility. It is far better and would have been far better had this government said that it was impossible or would be near impossible to hold electricity rates at 4.3 cents because the costs were increasing, the costs of producing and transmitting the electricity would invariably increase, the deregulation of the electricity would mean that costs would increase, the taking of the coal-fired generation lines off would cause increases, the institution of natural gas would cause increases, the \$40 billion they want to spend on nuclear energy will cause increases in the costs. One ought not to be naive. All of those things are going to cost money, but I believe it is my policy, and I hope it should be every politician's policy, to be honest: to be honest with the taxpayers, the ratepayers, those who use electricity, those who use energy, and tell them that it cannot be produced and sold for less than what it costs to do it.

When I said that in public debates on television, I was, as I said earlier, derided for making that statement. People I think maybe were naive, but they listened to the Liberals and they listened to the promise. I know I got asked at more than one door, and I got asked and derided by the Liberals during those public debates that, "There he is. He's going to raise your rates. Don't vote for him; he's going to raise your rates." In fact, Mr. Speaker, that's what they did themselves. I am asking them, if you can't do anything about what you said before, then in the next election be brave, be forthright. Tell people that you're going to raise the rates if that's what you're going to do, because in the end you'll either stand or fall on it. But if you continue to do what you did in the past, if you promise them to flatline the rates, it's going to come back, I swear, to haunt you.

Even with this maximum of \$5 a month, people will be worse off; single people on welfare and ODSP will be worse off today than they were under the Mike Harris government. I've said that in here before. Of course, I get protestations from the other side, saying, "Oh, no. We've raised the rates. We've done this," and they play with numbers. But I had an opportunity in estimates two weeks ago to ask the same question of the Minister of Community and Social Services, the Honourable Madeleine Meilleur. I asked her about whether or not people who did not have children, people who could be married but did not have children, were actually better off or worse off than they were at the time that the Liberals took office. She admitted quite candidly and honestly, and I commend her for it, that because the inflation rate had been slightly above 6% since the Liberals took office, and in two particular budgets, the first one where a 3% increase was given, and then a budget where nothing was given, and then a budget where 2% was given, in fact people are approximately 1% worse off today than they were when the Liberals took office.

**1720**

If you have children, and because you've taken a little bit of the clawback increases and allowed those few dollars to be taken, you might be able to see that those with children are ever so slightly better off than they were under the Harrisites in the last year of that government. But everyone else—all of the disabled and all those who cannot work and all of those who are on general welfare and all those people in northern communities who have no option but to take welfare and ODSP rates because there is literally nothing else for them to do—all of them are worse off. This \$5 is not enough to make a difference. Even with the \$5, they're still going to be worse off than those same people were in the deepest, darkest days of Mike Harris.

**Mr. Leal:** They were hard days.

**Mr. Prue:** They were hard days, but these are harder days. You're not listening. These are harder days for your constituents who are on ODSP or welfare, if they don't have children, than when the Conservatives were in government. You ought not to be proud. You ought not to say that the Conservatives were somehow worse, because the reality is that you have enough money. You had \$3.2 billion of surplus that could have made a real difference to these people, but you chose not to do it.

This is going to be giving I guess a few bucks back to some people, but it's very little and it's far too late. The gap—I'm reading here from Toronto's Vital Signs 2005. It relates to Toronto but it's pretty much the same kind of thing that's taking place across the rest of the province. I'm going to read in part from it. "Longer-term trends show that the gap between high- and low-income households in the Toronto region is widening, while the middle class is shrinking." It goes on to talk about "185,290 children (35.1% of Toronto's children) lived in low-income families ... more ... than in 2002."

It went on to say, "The number of low-income households has grown most significantly in the outer areas of



the city," although there are some pockets of higher income out here as well. It says, "Between 1980 and 2000 the average income of the richest 10% of families in the region rose by 23% while the average income for the poorest 10% of families fell by 4%." That's a 27% gap. It finally says, "Over 20 years ... low-income households increased from 18% to 22% of all households in the city and high-income households grew from 19% to 22% of households. Middle-income households fell from 63% to 56%...."

What's happening is that the middle class, the much-vaunted middle class, in this city and I would say probably throughout all of Ontario is shrinking. Who are increasing are the rich and the poor. This is not something that Ontarians should be proud of, and it's not something that this bill in any way deals with.

I ask members to think about the \$5 a month that you're going to do. Can you do more? Will you do more? Will you listen to the opposition and say that \$5 is not enough? Will you listen to the opposition and say, "Make that \$20 a month, or \$30 a month, or \$40 a month?" They're going to need that for energy costs. They're going to need it. You have the money, or at least you had it, and you'll likely have it again in the upcoming budget. If this is truly something to look after energy, if it's truly something to look after poverty, be meaningful, because 16 cents a day is not going to cut it. That's all you're offering here and that's all there is. This \$5 will still see those, the most vulnerable in our society, worse off.

I don't think I'm going to use up my whole hour either.

**Mr. Kormos:** Yes, you are.

**Mr. Prue:** No, I don't think so.

**Mr. Kormos:** Yes, you are.

**Mr. Prue:** I've been told that I should, and you want me to, too?

**Mr. Dave Levac (Brant):** I'm listening.

**Mr. Prue:** Well, okay. I want to make the points I've been trying to make—reiterate them and make them as strongly as I can.

The first one is that you ran on a policy, on a platform, of freezing rates and capping them at 4.3%. You have not kept that promise. In not keeping that promise, you have done several things that have hurt the economy, particularly manufacturing, pulp and paper in the north, mines and the industrial and automotive sectors—all those manufacturers, all those industries that use high amounts of electricity. We have forced too many places to shut down; there have been too many jobs lost. Although there are some technological jobs and others that are slowly, in some part, taking the place of those industrial jobs, many of them tend to be lower wage, many of them tend to be in the service sector, many of them tend to be of short duration and, unfortunately, Ontario and Toronto, which were at one time the manufacturing hub of Ontario, are suffering.

You broke that promise, and what it meant to people—poor people and middle-class and middle-income people—is that the costs of simply living have gone up

more than some of them can afford. This bill will give 16 cents a day to the poorest of the poor, if they're lucky. It will give nothing to those who live at or above the poverty line. This bill will provide nothing financially to those people. This government is not doing enough to help those who are in need, this government is not doing enough to help our poor and this government is not doing enough to help our middle class.

This government, I would suggest, has messed the energy file. That's the second message I want to give. Without much of a plan, you have driven up the cost of energy. Without much of a plan, you have instituted privatization of some of the key energy portfolios. Without much of a plan, you are putting an unwanted development in my riding, or next to my riding, right at the border: a mega gas plant on the waterfront, which is going to destroy the dream of Toronto of being an international city and a harbour city, of having a waterfront that people will want to visit.

You're going to put in gas-fired generation for a reason which I think is spurious at best. The reason given by this minister, by the previous minister and by the Premier is that you don't want the lights to go out. With the greatest respect, this energy file has been mis-managed. The first thing that should have been done, and needs to be done, is not to give rebates. The first thing is to reduce energy consumption. To spend any kind of money at all on reducing energy consumption would be far better in terms of this province and its economy and the people we are attempting to help. That has not been done, and I see no evidence of it being done. I see absolutely no evidence at all. That's what happened in places like California. That's what happened in places where the energy crunch came earlier rather than later. It's what happened in most of Europe. I know that the energy we can obtain from the wind, from solar power and from everything else is immeasurable, but we are not taking advantage of the technologies that are there. Instead, we're going on some kind of mass development of energy, which is expensive.

I heard what was being said today, in terms of energy, about coal. I have some considerable sympathy with the idea that we should shut down all the coal-fired generating plants. I don't think anyone who is an environmentalist will disagree with that. Every single person knows that coal-fired generating plants cause too much NO<sub>x</sub> and too much SO<sub>x</sub> and too much pollution, and cause people with respiratory problems to get worse. And we all know that they need to be phased out. We all know that. The question is, how do you replace them and how fast do you do it? That's the question that was asked today, and I think I need to speak about it. I heard the question that was asked by the leader of the third party, and I heard the non-answer.

1730

Yes, we all know they need to be shut down. There are some who think that you can make clean coal. I think the only thing you can do—and I agree with the previous minister—is make cleaner coal. But in the end, the



province and the people here need to know about that energy solution, and there were no answers coming today, because I don't believe, in spite of what the Liberals promised in the last election, that it is conceivable or possible or in the best interest to do it by 2007. They have dilly-dallied and delayed far too long for that timetable to still be possible.

But I am more worried—I am more worried as we hand out 16 cents a day to the poorest of the poor—that we whack the entire province with \$40 billion on nuclear power, and I know that's coming. I know that's coming because I heard the non-answers again today. I heard the answers and I know it's coming.

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Prue:** You know it's coming too: \$40 billion on nuclear, and I think that's where we're headed. You know, the reason—

**Mr. Kormos:** That's minimum.

**Mr. Prue:** That's minimum; that's for starters. That's what's going to be planned.

We also, if you know any history at all about nuclear in this province—and I'm not one of those people who are afraid of it. I don't go to bed at night dreaming and worrying about Three Mile Island or Chernobyl. But I do worry about the cost, because the costs are what have caused Ontario Hydro—the costs and the cost overruns and the amount of money that they owe can all be traced absolutely and clearly to the nuclear energy of the 1960s and 1970s and 1980s. That's when the plants were built. The plants were all over budget. The plants were all expensive. The plants all needed to be maintained; they all needed to be mothballed; they all needed to be rebuilt. That's what I think is going to happen.

Most of the rest of the world has come to the correct conclusion that energy should be produced in other ways: exciting things you can find in Europe and in Japan of people harnessing the sun or the wind; exciting things on biomass; exciting things on digging down and using thermal energy from beneath the ground. Iceland—of course, they're kind of blessed with hot springs and things—expects to go completely thermal and wind power, and that will produce all of its energy within the next 10 years. Those are the kinds of things that we as Canadians should be looking at. We are not looking at that; we are looking at \$40 billion of nuclear. I wish I could say that the minister, in response to the questions he was asked about that today, had been more specific—that's the most parliamentary I can be. He was asked whether that report is coming, when it's coming, and it's not coming.

I've heard “shortly” too. I remember in here asking questions day after day, month after month, of the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing about the change to the Tenant Protection Act, and it was always the same thing: “Shortly.” “Shortly.” “Shortly.” “We're looking at it; it's coming soon.” It was finally about two years late, but it arrived, and it arrived to much fanfare, I'm sure, from the Liberal benches, and unfortunately had several gaping holes in it that make it very unpalatable to the majority of tenants in this province.

But be that as it may, this is what I'm hearing too about the energy file, about the \$40 billion for nuclear, and I would expect that's where this province is headed.

If the province spends \$40 billion, I want everyone to just take a deep breath and figure out how much, when you divide that by 12.5 million people in this province, that's going to cost us. That is a huge range: \$3,000 or so each, if my math is right. It might be \$30,000 if it's wrong—better get the right number of zeroes—but \$3,000 or so each. That's what it's going to cost us to try to do that. When you put that amount of money in front and then you look at the \$5 a month or the \$60 a year that you're going to give to the poor, you'll know that will be eaten up in nothing flat, and in fact they'll be paying their portion of this too in very short order.

The last point I wanted to make is again about the \$5. The \$5 is not sufficient to make a real difference to those whose energy bills are costing too much. You've all had an opportunity, I'm sure, as politicians to knock on doors, to meet your constituents, to talk to them. I will tell you that probably the number one or number two issue of most of Ontario is not education or health anymore; it's energy. They are looking for some way in which to control those costs. Whether the costs be to drive their car, whether the costs be to turn on the lights or to heat their homes, they are looking at the energy costs as they outpace the ability of the middle class and the poor to pay.

This bill will offer a little, tiny bit of relief—not enough—to the very poor. I ask the members opposite to think about all of those who earn the minimum wage, all of those who struggle by at the poverty line of \$20,000 or \$21,000 per year. They are considered to be living in poverty. This bill is going to do nothing to help them whatsoever.

I ask the members opposite to look very carefully at how the bill is constructed, because if you have to make an application for either the rental of your property or home ownership, if it is on that particular narrow section of the Income Tax Act which is based on the property tax credit, it will leave out far too many people who do not rent and who do not own.

I go back to the man in Peawanuck: He neither rents nor owns. The property in which he lives belongs to the band. They recognize his circumstances, and I do not believe that he has paid rent for a number of years, because that is what happens in those communities. If you work and you have an income, you pay; if you don't, the band looks after you. I don't believe that he would get any kind of property tax credit from this.

I ask you to look at whether or not adult or disabled children who live at home are going to be able to apply for any kind of tax incentive. They are not. This bill does not allow them to. They do not gain a property tax credit since they neither rent nor own, but they live in the house and they consume electricity, and it costs money, even if you're poor. I ask you to look at the same thing for senior citizens, many of whom have gone to live with their children in their later years, many of whom no longer



maintain a house or an apartment but live comfortably and well with people who love them in their own home surroundings. They are not going to get any money from this property tax credit either because they cannot claim it. So many of the very people whom you purport to help will be left out.

I hope this bill goes to committee. I hope this bill is looked at very carefully and seriously, because, in spite of the fact that I want to give every one of those people 16 cents a day, for those who get the most, or 12 cents or 11 or nine for those who don't, I want to see in committee whether it's possible to raise that rate, and I want to see in committee if it's possible to include all of those people, those hundreds of thousands of Ontarians, who desperately need the money, who make use of the electricity and who are left out.

I know my House leader is not going to like it, but I think I've said all that I need to say.

**Mr. Kormos:** You're a free agent.

**Mr. Prue:** I know I'm a free agent. I think I've said all that I need to say. I'm going to leave nine minutes, enough time so that people might comment on this and we can hear from one additional speaker. Thank you very much for your attention.

**The Acting Speaker:** I thank the member. Questions and comments?

**Mrs. Carol Mitchell (Huron-Bruce):** I'm certainly pleased to rise today to speak to such an important program for our fellow Ontarians, the Ontario home electricity relief program. This \$100 million will assist 1.5 million low-income Ontarians with rising electricity costs.

We're very proud that this assistance program is being put in place. We also recognize that by adding another layer of bureaucracy, it makes it more difficult to receive the programs that we put in place. We've acknowledged that, and having the funds flow through the Canada Revenue Agency for the delivery of this payment allows the delivery of the payment to flow in the fall as well.

1740

One of the things I do want to do is thank the member from Beaches-East York for his comments. One of the things the member spoke to was issues at the door, and the two issues they're not talking about: health care and education. What they are talking about is electricity; they're talking about their hydro. The reason they're not talking about those is that, in their minds, they're perceived as fixed. What they're talking about now is electricity, and they're looking for solutions that go forward.

I have the privilege and honour of representing the riding of Huron-Bruce, and I can tell you that how we deliver our electricity has changed dramatically in my riding. When you drive, you see the turbines that are in place and the sense from the agricultural community of the opportunities that are available to them that were not available to them. When I look at Bruce Power as well, what I see is revitalization and moving forward for a safe, reliable, affordable energy policy in Ontario.

**Mr. Wilson:** I'll comment again and try to emphasize to the Liberal government: Why don't you just cut these people's taxes? We all agree that we should be helping low-income people, especially with electricity rates having risen some 55% since the Liberals came to office.

I agree with the member for Beaches-East York. In fact, I thought his comments were excellent. He had sort of different reasons why you're not going to be able to target the people you want to target with the assistance. Mine is that most poor people I know in my riding in particular—I'm familiar with their situations—including some of my own family, don't file income tax forms. So it doesn't matter whether you have the Canada Revenue Agency doling out this maximum \$5 a month to individuals.

As I commented before, you're going to have a huge bureaucracy—it's going to cost you more than \$5 to print the cheques—and the fact of the matter is, you won't actually hit the people you should be trying to help. We took 800,000 people off the tax rolls when Mike Harris and his government cut taxes. They're not filing income tax forms any more, so the fact of the matter is, you won't hit the people you're supposed to hit. This is a phony-baloney program. It's really sending the middle class cheques—up to \$120 to families. Their hydro bills just went up 15% on May 1. They're going to go up again and again. Every six months, the Ontario Energy Board is going to adjust prices.

I want to mention also, in the 20 seconds I have, the exception I take to the Minister of Energy's allusion today. Apparently he says that I said I'm not in favour of conservation programs. I'm 100% in favour of conservation programs. That particular debate was talking about the NDP's conservation program, where energy consumption actually went up as they mailed out light bulbs to every home in Ontario.

**Mr. Kormos:** This bill is the sort of thing that just drives voters and residents crazy—it does. This is pure, unadulterated bullspit by anybody's perception, and the people out there know better. They know when they're being bullspitted by their government. They know when they're being taken to the cleaners.

Look: May 1, a 15% increase in electricity rates; on a good day, 10 bucks a month. That doesn't come close to covering the extra 15% that the Liberals gouged you as of May Day. It doesn't even come close. This has nothing to do with electricity consumption. It ignores the reality of a family with a net income of \$35,000. When you've got four or five kids and you're living in Toronto, or anywhere else in the province of Ontario for that matter, \$35,000 is a pretty modest income, let me tell you. But that family gets zip. They know they've been bullspitted by Dalton McGuinty and the Liberals. They know bullspit when they see it. They've had it handed to them for far too long by far too many governments.

Mr. Prue, you laugh. But people have had it up to here. This is a pathetic, cynical exercise by a government that is in desperate trouble because it has broken every promise. Of course, it now wears that mantle; it's been



branded as the government of broken promises and the government that fails to deliver—failed to deliver for seniors, failed to deliver for students, failed to deliver for some of the poorest and most vulnerable people in the province, failed to deliver for people with medical needs, failed to deliver for kids with autism, failed to deliver on its promise to maintain the cap on electricity rates. Those fit.

**Mr. Arthurs:** I'm pleased to enter into the debate just for a couple of minutes, following the member for Beaches–East York. I managed to hear just about all of his comments; I slipped out for a couple of minutes. I tried to pay attention closely to what he had to say, as I know he does when he's here listening to other speakers. If we all did a little more of that around the House, the kinds of things the member for Beaches–East York does in paying attention to what's happening, we'd probably have a better place here some days.

I want to just draw attention, though, to the composite quintile we're talking about. We can talk about 16 cents a day or \$5 a month. The reality is that this is an investment, albeit one time, in the 2006 year based on 2005 tax filings of \$100 million. It will go to the benefit of some 1.5 million Ontarians. That's a substantial amount of money in anybody's books and a lot of people in anyone's books. Certainly it doesn't reach all Ontarians and it certainly doesn't provide all of the dollars that one might like. But it's part of that composite package. I think the member for Beaches–East York takes something to wrap his arms around a bit: some of those broader social and human needs. This is a little piece of trying to address some of those broader human and social needs as they relate to energy costs.

There's no question that we have some long-term objectives that have to be met when it comes to the energy file. We have to get new sources in place; we have to drive an agenda of conservation to use less. Frankly, part of that overall agenda has to be increases in prices, as we've seen, both to encourage conservation and to bring new power on stream. Clearly we want to keep the lights on in the province for the purposes of the economy; and at the same time we want to provide some level of protection for those who are in great need in the province.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member has two minutes to respond.

**Mr. Prue:** I'd like to thank the members for Huron–Bruce, Simcoe–Grey, Niagara Centre and Pickering–Ajax–Uxbridge for their comments.

In terms of what they said, the member for Huron–Bruce talked about wind turbines, and she's absolutely right: We need to embark on those wind turbines as quickly as possible. One need only to travel in Canada, to of all places Alberta, which has all of the oil, to see them out there, or to travel anywhere in Europe or Asia and see massive wind turbines providing much of the energy for the countries that are there, to know that that is a future we need in Ontario. The sad reality is, though, that there are only several spots in the province that are windy

enough to make them economically viable, but I hope in every one of those spots that they are used.

The member for Simcoe–Grey talked about the taxation system, and I would agree with him that the overall taxation system seems to be a better tool than relying on the property tax rebate. As I said in my speech, and what I hope the members opposite will take to heart, is that that leaves out too many vulnerable people: older people living with family, younger people who are disabled, with special needs, who live at home, or children who live with family who are unemployed. They don't have much of an income but they too need to be captured in this.

The member for Niagara Centre taught me a new word. I'm not going to use it. I wasn't laughing at his comments so much as his very, very eloquent use of a very strange word.

Last but not least, I thank the member for Pickering–Ajax–Uxbridge for his comments. We all, in everything we do, need to look at the broader human and social needs that he so eloquently expressed there. That is what this bill needs to do, and needs to do better than it has on its second reading.

1750

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr. Levac:** I appreciate the opportunity to engage in the discussion about Bill 117. I want to pick up on what the member for Pickering–Ajax–Uxbridge was rightfully pointing out in this debate. We've heard from the opposition that they're dead set against this type of program for various reasons. My suggestion to them is that I'd like to have them re-evaluate that, because the parliamentary assistant was making it quite clear that this is a piece to a puzzle that needs to be worked on as an inclusive piece of legislation which hopefully and eventually will gain us the bigger picture at the end of the day.

If we don't do it that way, I fear that the member from Beaches–East York is going to be disappointed; that any single bill that comes out of this place is not going to address what he's passionate about, and that is those people who have been disenfranchised completely. I appreciate the position he takes, but I think he needs to taper it with a little bit of understanding of what the parliamentary assistant is talking about, and that is that with each piece of the puzzle that gets added to that picture, there is a profound hope that we begin to address those issues.

As far as the bill itself, An Act to amend the Income Tax Act to provide for an Ontario home electricity payment, that's exactly what it's trying to do and that's exactly what it says it's going to do. I think it's important for me to read from the section that says who's qualifying, because some people are being somewhat mischievous, saying it's not good enough for those who are getting it and we're not giving it to the people who deserve to get it etc. Let's break away the confusion that seems to be out there and, for the record, make it quite clear who does qualify.



"An individual is deemed to have made an overpayment on account of tax payable under this act for the 2005 taxation year if the following conditions are satisfied:

"1. The individual is resident in Ontario on December 31, 2005 and a return of income in respect of the individual's 2005 taxation year is filed for the purposes of this act before January 1, 2007"—those who apply.

"2. The individual has not died on or before October 1, 2006 and is resident in Ontario on that day.

"3. The individual is not confined to a prison or similar institution on December 31, 2005 or on October 1, 2006 and is not confined to a prison or similar institution during 2005 for one or more periods that in total exceed six months." Obviously we're cutting back on those people who might be sitting in jail getting a cheque. We don't like that either. I think that's important to point out.

"4. The individual or his or her qualified relation reported an occupancy cost in his or her return of income for 2005 for the purpose of claiming a property tax credit under subsection 8 (3), (3.1) or (3.2) and was entitled to deduct from tax otherwise payable under this act for that year an amount calculated under subsection 8 (3), (3.1) or (3.2).

"5. The provincial minister has not made an Ontario home electricity payment to a person who was the individual's qualified relation at the end of the 2005 taxation year." There's a lot of discussion on who doesn't qualify as much as who does qualify.

"6. The amount of the individual's Ontario home electricity payment as determined under subsection (4) is greater than zero."

I think in terms of the specifics of the bill, it's that piece to the puzzle that the parliamentary assistant is talking about. Quite frankly, as has been portrayed by both opposition parties, there seems to be some impression out there that absolutely nobody needs or wants this money.

The old story about sending cheques out—it's almost bizarre to think of this, but we're hearing the same arguments back and forth about giving cheques out. That's a difficult situation to be entrenched in as to whether or not we do all of what was said by the previous speakers, which talks about the reliance totally on tax cuts.

What we saw happen in the tax cuts was a picture painted by the members opposite that perfection had come to Ontario because of tax cuts. We saw what happened with tax cuts. We're the recipient of the tax cuts. That's why we ended up having to put a health tax on. We ended up with a \$5.2-billion deficit, and some. What's happening here is the release of information solely to support one particular position and forgetting that there are other pieces of information that needed to get on: the low dollar, the American economy was extremely hot, the Canadian economy got hot.

I tell you, the influences of everything else included in that—for somebody to stand up and simply say that our

tax cut regime created this wonderful utopia of Ontario during that time frame and we created every single job is like the rooster standing up and saying, "I get credit for the sun rising. I crow, the sun comings up, therefore, I must take credit for it." The natural forces that were involved in the economy during that time period were chugging along very nicely, thank you very much. To the NDP's position during the time period in which they were in government—there were other forces acting. For anyone to stand back and simply say, "It was all their fault that everything went down," is absolutely false as well.

The other mitigating factors that were playing into this have to be considered when we start doing these programs. The "piece of the puzzle" theory is the one I would subscribe to, that the parliamentary assistant is trying to get us to understand. That piece of the puzzle is what we're talking about today, Bill 117. Bill 117 is going to be giving those people who are having difficulty some money to help them offset the cost of electricity. That's a simple point.

Simple point number two: Some 1.5 million people are going to be getting some help during this particular bill, should we decide to pass it, and pass it along quite quickly, because I don't think they should be made to wait that much longer. That piece of the puzzle is quite clear: \$100 million to the people of Ontario, the 1.5 million people who will be receiving that, is where this piece of the puzzle gets put into that big picture, and we now say, "Check, done, let's move on." It doesn't allow the government the permission to stop, and stop working for the people who are disenfranchised, who need our assistance. I would suggest to you very respectfully that several people on all sides of this House said that a false hydro cap is what caused an awful lot of our municipalities to go into debt—my municipality, up to \$1.5 million annually, because we put this false 43-cent cap on there. Why did the previous government choose 43 cents? It matched Toronto's cap. Toronto decided to cap, and everybody said, "Well, it must be the number, so let's cap it." They didn't want to tell you that the municipalities who had their own power sources were going to get whacked.

What we're talking about now is trying to eliminate all of that by going into the "piece of the puzzle" mentality that says each time we move forward we're going to be addressing those issues. The member from Niagara Centre tries to tell us that we've done nothing for seniors, we've done nothing for the disabled, we've done nothing for the jobless, we've done nothing for manufacturing, we've done nothing at all. He wants to tell the world that this Liberal government has done nothing. Guess what? You'll be absolutely shocked and surprised, I'm going to stand up and say to the member from Niagara Centre; you're wrong. You're wrong.

Have other successive governments tried to do something for the people of Ontario? Absolutely. And has the previous NDP government done things to help the people of Ontario? Yes, they have. To stand up and start making these proclamations from where you're standing, depend-



ing on where you're sitting each year, is silly; it's ridiculous. What the member from Niagara Centre wants to know is, are we looking for that leadership? They've had it up to here. "Bullspit," I think the word was.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Levac:** Bull feathers and hockey pucks and all of the other adjectives you can throw together to talk about that. What we're talking about is asking us to go down a path that makes that big puzzle the best puzzle we can build. That's what Bill 117 is attempting to do. It's a small piece of legislation; it's not all that thick. I think it's a few pages thick—five or six pages long. And five or six pages, to make that small piece pop in there—

**Mr. Kormos:** That's how big it is.

**Mr. Levac:** I want the member to hold that up. If we could get the cameras over there, I'd love it, because what he's showing us is what some people would love to have. It's what some people would love to have to help them with their electricity bill. That's one of the pieces of the puzzle. Now I have a couple of people nagging over there saying, "That's peanuts; that's nothing. Don't spend \$100 million for 1.5 million people and assist them—assist them—with their difficult task of keeping up with hydro." The difficult task, I would suggest to you, is that nobody has it perfect. I would challenge anybody to stand up and tell me that they absolutely have all of the answers for hydro and energy. Nobody is standing. That's why. Because it's a complex issue. You cannot produce the electricity just like that and say, "We've got the answers to it all." Quite frankly, we get tired of hearing things from the opposition that they continually rail on, saying, "We did it perfectly. You're not doing it perfectly. So we're right, you're wrong." Welcome to the real world of what this place is all about. It's the art of trying to figure out how to put that puzzle together. The parliamentary assistant had it right when he said that this is one piece of that puzzle that's going to speak to 1.5 million people in the province of Ontario. It's going to speak to them in a way that says, "Yes, your government understands that something's going on." We continue to try to pull the pieces together and put them on that board so that the picture comes out that it's a better Ontario for it.

Have we done something for our senior citizens? You bet we have. Have we done something to make our place a healthier place? Yes, we have. Have we brought waiting times down, as we committed to? Yes, we have. Have we done those things that we said we were going to

do to bring them down? Yes, we have. Education is better than it has ever been before. Health care is headed in the path that says that we're going to be judged by our results. We're going to measure our results. Have we ever measured them before?

**Interjections:** No.

**Mr. Levac:** No. Are we measuring them now?

**Interjections:** Yes.

**Mr. Levac:** Yes, we are. I think that's going to give us those pieces of the puzzle that requires us to think about how we're going to make things better for the people of Ontario and, by God, we're getting there with Bill 117, and I thank the finance minister and the parliamentary assistant for giving us those.

Speaker, I will stop right now so that you can stand up.

**The Acting Speaker:** Pursuant to the earlier order of the House, I'm now required to adjourn this debate and call orders of the day.

**Hon. Mr. Watson:** Mr. Speaker, before I call the order, I just wanted to comment on what an excellent job you're doing in the chair. I think all members agree: The member from Kitchener Centre has done a wonderful job.

**Mr. Kormos:** What are you suggesting there, Jim? I think he's doing a great job.

**Hon. Mr. Watson:** I'm suggesting he's no Michael Prue.

#### CITY OF LONDON ACT, 2006

Mr. Ramal moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr24, An Act respecting the City of London.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. John Milloy):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Mr. Ramal moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr24, An Act respecting the City of London.

**The Acting Speaker:** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

It being after 6 o'clock, this House stands adjourned until 6:45.

*The House adjourned at 1802.*

*Evening meeting reported in volume B.*

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No. 80B

N° 80B

ISSN 1180-2987

## Legislative Assembly of Ontario

Second Session, 38<sup>th</sup> Parliament

## Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Deuxième session, 38<sup>e</sup> législature

# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

# Journal des débats (Hansard)

Monday 29 May 2006

Lundi 29 mai 2006

Speaker  
Honourable Michael A. Brown

Clerk  
Claude L. DesRosiers

Président  
L'honorable Michael A. Brown

Greffier  
Claude L. DesRosiers





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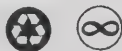
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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 29 May 2006

# ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 29 mai 2006

*The House met at 1845.*

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### EDUCATION STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT (STUDENT PERFORMANCE), 2006

### LOI DE 2006 MODIFIANT DES LOIS EN CE QUI CONCERNE L'ÉDUCATION (RENDEMENT DES ÉLÈVES)

Mr. Peters, on behalf of Ms. Pupatello, moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 78, An Act to amend the Education Act, the Ontario College of Teachers Act, 1996 and certain other statutes relating to education / Projet de loi 78, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'éducation, la Loi de 1996 sur l'Ordre des enseignantes et des enseignants de l'Ontario et certaines autres lois se rapportant à l'éducation.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Michael Prue):** The Minister of Labour has moved third reading of Bill 78. Speakers? Minister of Education.

**Hon. Sandra Pupatello (Minister of Education, minister responsible for women's issues):** Thank you very much, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker:** I'd better clarify with the Clerk here. It was moved by the Minister of Labour, so he has the floor first. He must begin the speech. Minister of Labour.

**Hon. Steve Peters (Minister of Labour):** I'll be sharing my time with the Minister of Education and the honourable member from Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Aldershot.

I'm pleased that we are here tonight debating third reading of Bill 78. I would like to ask the Minister of Education to provide the House and the viewing audience with some of the highlights of this most important piece of legislation.

**The Acting Speaker:** Minister of Education.

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** I really appreciate that commendation by the Minister of Labour.

I rise in the House today for third reading of some very important legislation for the direction of education in Ontario. If passed, the student performance bill would be a tremendous boost for improved student performance.

In March, the McGuinty government introduced the concept of setting provincial outcomes to maximize our education initiatives and remove barriers to greater student achievement. The one-size-fits-all approach in education adopted by the previous government is simply ineffective.

This bill is a significant tune-up that will modernize education as a condition for success of students. It contains several limited but substantive amendments to the Education Act and the Ontario College of Teachers Act. These amendments provide the legal support necessary to enable the most important objective in education in this province—improved student performance.

To do this, the bill proposes four main points: initiatives to support teaching excellence; a process of consultation to clarify responsibilities for boards and the ministry; a partnership in education based on respect; and openness to the public.

My colleague Ted McMeekin will speak about some important topics regarding this proposed legislation, such as responsibilities, flexibility, and trustees. I'd like to speak about some of the amendments made to the bill and address the important topic of teaching excellence.

Over the past few weeks, we've heard from many of our partners in education. We've had meaningful discussion and I've listened to their concerns. In response to the issues raised, I am pleased to report some of the amendments that have been passed by the standing committee on social policy.

In response to concerns around privacy regarding the collection of student information by the ministry, and after the ministry worked closely with the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner, a motion was passed to clarify this section of the bill to ensure that it conforms to federal and provincial privacy legislation.

Information is an essential ingredient to support meaningful dialogue at all levels in the education system about strategies to help every student succeed.

Information about courses, classes, students and teachers is needed to help ensure that effective policy and program directions are set by the ministry to promote student achievement. Information is needed to be able to publicly report on the performance of the education system as a whole.

After working with the ministry, the Information and Privacy Commissioner has no objections to the legislation. Privacy and security considerations are a priority for the ministry in every aspect of data collection and analysis.



On another topic, principals and vice-principals have requested that their own peers be involved in all reviews or hearings involving principals or vice-principals conducted by the Ontario College of Teachers' investigation, discipline and fitness-to-practise committees. We discussed this issue with principals and vice-principals and we agreed with them. A motion was passed to amend the bill to enable this peer review for principals and vice-principals.

**1850**

In addition, a motion was passed that would specify a requirement in the act for the government to conduct consultations prior to finalizing any regulations concerning shared responsibility in furthering the quality of education.

This government recognizes that to improve student performance, we must support the very people who deliver education every day: our teachers. This government believes that giving our teachers the respect that they deserve is critical for teaching excellence. Teachers are the single most important influence, apart from family, in shaping the future of our children and our province. Every day, teachers across Ontario inspire students and colleagues with their innovation and passion for teaching. They play a vital role in ensuring our children get the skills and knowledge they need to achieve excellence. We're committed to supporting them. We believe that teaching is more than a profession. It's one of the highest callings and a matter of public service. When you understand the import of their work, I think everyone would agree.

That's why we've put into effect a policy of respect for teachers and have made it our responsibility to ensure that our teachers have what they need to help our students succeed. That means providing the support and recognition for what teachers and educators do on behalf of students every day.

This legislation proposes some critical changes to enhance teacher excellence. It would revoke the pen-and-paper test that didn't evaluate a teacher's actual classroom experience and effectiveness, in favour of a new teacher induction program. We are hearing rave reviews about this so far. It would facilitate the extension of teacher collective agreements beginning September 2004 from a two- to a four-year term. It would also revitalize the Ontario College of Teachers to carry out its mandate by adding six elected positions to council, enough to give classroom teachers a majority through college regulation. Teachers deserve the privilege and the responsibility of self-regulation.

Our platform commitment was a college council composed mostly of working classroom teachers, just like the governing bodies of the college of nurses and the college of social workers, and composed mostly of respected members of those professions.

In the last college election, a mere 4% of teachers even bothered to cast a vote, indicating a profound loss of confidence of the college's stewardship in the profession.

Bill 78 strengthens the college by adding six new seats to the council. On May 18, the college approved regulation amendments that would assign 19 seats, including the six new ones, to practising classroom teachers. With 37 positions making up council, this would give classroom teachers an effective majority voice on council.

This is something entirely new for the college: a college regulated by teachers, a truly self-regulatory body. Every council member would have a duty to serve and protect the public interest, and would be required to take an oath of office.

In addition, a public interest committee appointed by the minister would assist with questions of public interest and governance. We're also putting in place some of the strongest conflict-of-interest provisions for a professional college in Ontario. None of these provisions existed under two of the previous governments.

This government is taking responsibility for education in Ontario and giving our partners in education the respect that they deserve. I hope this bill will find the support of my colleagues, because ultimately it represents what we all desire to accomplish in education: openness, partnership based on respect and, best of all, improved student performance.

I'll be heartened to hear the words of my colleague and parliamentary assistant, Ted McMeekin, who I know will follow with more detail.

**Mr. Ted McMeekin (Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Aldershot):** It's been said that once you set your foot in the river, the river is never the same. I think that's true. I rise today in this House to participate in the third reading of the student performance bill.

As you know, this bill proposes some very important legislation concerning the direction of education in Ontario. While Minister Papatello has already spoken about some important topics regarding this proposed legislation, I'd like to speak for a few moments about how this bill will help build relationships based on respect and how it will address the topic of sharing responsibilities: two very important issues in today's educational environment.

This legislation would help build on the new era of respect and partnership already evident in schools and school boards across Ontario. It would respect school board trustees for the important work they do by giving them realistic supports, removing extreme penalties in the act related to trustee compliance, and strengthening and clarifying their role in stewarding education. It would respect student trustees by empowering and recognizing them through new scholarships, non-binding votes, procedural rights and access to increased resources. Trustees deserve to be treated with greater respect if the public is to appropriately understand their role and value that role. Their hard work and contribution toward increased student success has resulted in a productive environment of peace and stability, and improved student performance.

Of course, a trustee's capacity to undertake their role is an important ingredient. If passed, the bill would



permit school boards to set trustee compensation up to provincial limits, which would be set in regulation, in line with school boards elsewhere across Canada. It would also grant authority for regulations to provide a retroactive increase to trustees' honoraria for the current school year and provide a process for community input to what appropriate levels of trustee honoraria ought to be. It would also eliminate paternalistic and arbitrary penalties for trustees that were enacted under the previous government and provide a consultation process to clarify respective roles in the business of stewarding education. That also means remuneration. We know that a one-size-fits-all approach to remuneration won't work because it doesn't allow for the recognition of unique and local circumstances facing boards of various geographic and student body sizes.

There have been questions regarding the role of the citizens' advisory committee and their role in determining remuneration for local trustees. I want to assure all those present in the assembly this evening and those who may be watching at home that there will be consultations with respect to these regulations. Establishing and enhancing partnerships based on respect means more flexibility to boards so that they can make better decisions locally. We intend to create a new era of local flexibility and autonomy by empowering trustees in local allocation and policy decision-making.

If passed, this bill would introduce the authority for government, in consultation with school boards and other stakeholders, to make regulations to promote equality in education. It would also permit regulations to clarify ministry and board responsibilities related to significant goals, including the effective use of resources; student outcomes, including elementary literacy and numeracy; and high school graduation rates. The government understands very well that the delivery of education programs and services must be done through a partnership between the government and the boards of education. We understand the importance of consultation and of having a real sense of buy-in to any standards that may ultimately be established.

#### 1900

Our government has a solid record of advancing its goals through consultation, and we're committed to continuing this approach. As the minister mentioned, a motion was passed that would specify a requirement in the act for the government to conduct public consultations prior to finalizing any regulations concerning the duties of boards to further the quality of education. I think that's really important. That really gives some outward and visible evidence of our commitment to a consultative process.

In addition, our government plans to embark on a special consultation with trustees and other educational partners around the nature of provincial outcomes, and which areas of increased flexibility need to be opened up. Student trustees are an equally critical component of our view for partnerships in education based on respect. As a first step in ongoing student trustee development, the

legislation, if passed, would provide student trustees with a variety of rights, including a scholarship or honorarium at the completion of their term, equal access to all board resources and the same right to attend trustee training opportunities as is in place for current board members.

I'm an idealist, but one without illusions. Achieving excellence in education would demand a genuine partnership, shared respect, mutual responsibility-taking and some agreement about results. To ensure confidence in public education, our government has identified areas of key provincial interest in education, and let me just list four of them: first, class size, and we've seen some real movement there; secondly, fiscal responsibility; third, improvements in literacy and numeracy; and finally, safe schools. If passed, the legislation would clarify ministry and board responsibilities as they relate to those interests and, of course, to the important area of student performance. It would enable the ministry, in consultation with school boards and other stakeholders, to actually set provincial outcomes—something parent groups really want to see across Ontario. Specific outcomes would be set in regulation after significant consultation between the ministry and the school boards.

We also propose to establish a standing committee on education to hold public hearings every year on the effectiveness of provincial funding. Why is this important? It's important because we need our partners to work together. We can only achieve our goals together, and by working together we'll get better results for Ontario students. As a government, we acknowledge that we can't do it alone.

Improved test scores are a good example of a shared responsibility that will lead to better outcomes for Ontario students. Our government has set clear targets for increased student achievement in literacy and numeracy. To support this goal, our government has set a target of 75% of 12-year-old students achieving the provincial standard on province-wide tests in reading, writing and math by the year 2008.

In the primary grades we are committed to reducing the number of students in the classroom to 20 or fewer so they can benefit from more individual attention. As you know, and as research has clearly shown time and time again, both here and abroad, small class sizes are crucial to ensuring that students get the individual attention they need to master the fundamentals of literacy and numeracy, and we are on track to implement a real cap of 20 students in the primary grades by the 2007-08 school year.

If passed, this bill would repeal sections of the Education Act relating to class size limits and replace it with the authority to make regulations governing class size that support phased implementation of the government's primary class size initiative and other related measures.

Over the years, teachers shouldered heavy workloads, received inadequate funding and worked in an environment that didn't always support them in their role on the front lines in our education system. After years of labour



strife under the previous government, the McGuinty government is proud to have played a role in a provincial dialogue that helped teacher federations and school boards reach the first-ever set of four-year collective agreements. Together we have signed 122 agreements, an unprecedented number of collective agreements across the province.

The result? Well, let me tell you: four years of peace and stability, more prep for elementary teachers, and 2,000 new specialist teachers by 2008-09 to deliver enriched arts, music and phys. ed. to more than two million Ontario students. We are grateful for all the people who have become involved with us to help make this happen. Frankly, without their co-operation and commitment to this new partnership on behalf of students, these successes would not have become a reality. Long-term peace and stability is the foundation for progress in education and for the success of our students.

I need to mention two more initiatives that are affected by shared responsibilities and are key to improved student performance: our primary class size initiative, and access to education through virtual technology. We all know that a crowded classroom is no way to get through to a child or to help them be the very best they can be. Small class sizes are crucial to ensuring that students get the individual attention they need to master the fundamentals so important to them. Before we began reducing class sizes in 2003-04, only 58% of grade 3 and grade 6 students were meeting or exceeding the provincial standard in reading, writing and math. After the first year of more primary teachers in the classroom, test scores rose to 62% for 2004-05. Clearly we're heading in the right direction, and all across the province educators, parents and students are very, very pleased. As class size drops further and other new government initiatives continue to enhance the learning environment, we expect that scores will continue to rise, and that's got to be good news for people in Ontario.

Studies have shown that primary school students in smaller classes perform significantly better in reading and mathematics, with the most pronounced gains importantly being made by minority and disadvantaged students. That's why we've been so eager to share the news that class sizes in the early grades are shrinking. Last September, Premier McGuinty announced that several hundred thousand Ontario students in the early grades were returning to school to smaller class sizes as they came back to continue their education. This is a direct result of \$126 million in additional funding this year, on top of \$90 million the year before, funding that means school boards could hire another 1,100 teachers to reduce class sizes in 1,300 elementary schools.

We know that kids who experience success in the early grades are more likely to stay in school and go on to achieve success in high school and beyond. That's why smaller classes in early years are such a priority and make so much sense.

## 1910

Aside from sharing responsibilities, this legislation would offer critical support to students learning through the use of virtual technology. More students would have access to the Ontario education advantage because school boards would be able to reach more students through new e-learning instructional methods. That's exciting. Recently, our government launched e-learning in Ontario schools so students could have more choice to customize their education based on their individual strengths and their individual interests. E-learning will allow students in our 21st-century schools to enrol in on-line English, history, science and other courses written and taught by our fine Ontario teachers. By modernizing education through e-learning, we are creating more learning choices and opportunities and more excitement in education and, frankly, more hope for a better future.

All of the amendments being proposed hinge on our ability to create and sustain lasting partnerships in education based on respect. I think it's clear why Ontario students, teachers and our publicly funded education system need this bill. It represents a brighter future for all the students in our province.

A revolution is coming, a revolution that will be peaceful if we are wise enough, compassionate if we care enough, and successful if we are fortunate enough to be able to stay the course. I believe that, if passed, its focus on sharing responsibilities with our educational partners will lead to a stronger and more robust educational system in Ontario. That's good news for all of us.

### **The Acting Speaker:** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Jim Wilson (Simcoe-Grey):** Just to comment about this bill, but in general on education, I remind the government that one of your campaign promises, one of the 231 promises, was to try and keep rural schools open. Yet, as we speak, in my riding two high schools are slated to be closed and 18 rural and small-town elementary public schools, and that's just the public school list that they're going through. I want to ask you to go back and talk to the powers that be in cabinet, in particular, and make sure this doesn't happen. In particular, the largest meeting I've been to in 16 years occurred about three weeks ago at Elmvale District High School. The gymnasium was absolutely full, and there were probably 50 or 60 people overflowing into the hallways, stifling hot, and yet it wasn't a particularly hot night. It's just that the school is in bad shape, and I must confess I didn't know it was in such bad shape. They should have invited me in, frankly, a couple of years ago. Why it's being slated to close, I don't know. I can't picture a town, Elmvale, without a high school. The school has been there since 1953. There are about 600 students there. The rumour is that you want to close that, and also Stayner Collegiate, and build one mega high school in Wasaga Beach. Yes, Wasaga Beach does want a high school, but its time will come as growth occurs. I'm supportive of that, but don't close Elmvale and don't close Stayner. Particularly Stayner: Just two summers ago you put in a world-class athletic track, a very expensive one. So I



remind the government of its promise to keep these schools open. You criticized Mike Harris for what you said was closure of rural schools, and now you're doing the same thing and worse.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath (Hamilton East):** It's certainly my pleasure to make a few comments on the speech by the member from Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Aldershot, my good friend and former colleague from regional council when it was a two-tier system way back then, the regional municipality of Hamilton–Wentworth.

Nonetheless, I think it's passing strange. In fact, one of our other colleagues from that community—I just happened to be speaking to her last night—happens to be a trustee for the public school board in our area and was incredulous, couldn't believe the claims the government was making, in terms of the way they've fixed the school system in the province of Ontario. In fact, she was quite sure that the shine would wear off very quickly because very soon parents are going to be able to see first-hand that the rhetoric the government is bringing forward doesn't stand up to the reality.

What kind of rhetoric is that? Ask any trustee, certainly from the city of Hamilton's schools boards, about what this government is really doing on issues like special needs and ESL and you'll find that they're not doing anything ESL- and special-needs-wise. That's still a huge problem in the system.

They have not dealt with the most fundamental problem they said they were going to deal with in the election campaign, and that is a funding formula that is inappropriate and doesn't work for school boards, doesn't work for students and doesn't work for teachers. It just doesn't work. Yet that most fundamental issue has been virtually ignored by the government.

They talk about numeracy and literacy numbers, but my good friend from the riding of Trinity–Spadina, who's going to be speaking his leadoff speech in this third reading debate later on tonight, will tell us very clearly that those EQAO scores are a result of tinkering that the government has decided to do, not only with the amount of time students are given to write these tests but also with the formulae, the way the tests are written.

Today is a sad day because we have third reading of a bill that doesn't really help students much at all in the province of Ontario.

**Mr. Khalil Ramal (London–Fanshawe):** I just want to stand up and speak in support of the bill. I want to echo my great friend and colleague from Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Aldershot when he was describing education, when he put the success of the students as the number one goal of this government since we got elected in October 2003: from Gerard Kennedy, the former Minister of Education, to the present minister, Sandra Pupatello, one direction to maintain the peace and tranquility in the education system.

Many people out there probably listen to us now, especially the educators. They come and listen to the member from Simcoe–Grey and the member from Hamilton East and they're going to laugh at them

because they know that's not correct. They know now that they have a government listening to them, consulting them, giving them some kind of respect and dignity when it comes to student achievement, and when it comes to training and giving the ability and techniques they need in order to teach and to be a success, and to achieve our goal of good educational results for the students in Ontario.

I believe strongly that this bill will strengthen our goal by maintaining trust in teachers by switching the qualifying test to an induction program which lets teachers and principals, the educators, help fellow new teachers to fit into the class and help give them the tools as to how to conduct themselves in order to be good, successful teachers. The trustees who work hard in the province of Ontario to make sure that students succeed: We'll also place some dignity and trust in those people.

Also, increase PAs from four to six to give students and teachers the ability to have some kind of preparation to know what future education they want to plan and do.

Hopefully I'll get another chance to speak in support of this bill.

**Mrs. Christine Elliott (Whitby–Ajax):** I'd just like to speak briefly to that part of Bill 78 which deals with the issue of the composition of the governing body of the Ontario College of Teachers.

When the college of teachers was first brought in by the Harris government, one of the core mandates of the college was to regulate the terms and conditions of teachers, to establish teachers' credentials and of course to regulate the conduct of teachers, and having some powers in order to ensure that their enforcement actions were carried out.

Since this government was elected in 2003, we've seen a slow and steady decline in the powers and the teeth of the college of teachers, so that at this point it's really rendered meaningless if the purpose is, in part, to protect members of the public and children from the actions of certain, although a minor number of, teachers.

**1920**

I heard the minister say in her remarks how wonderful it was that we would have a college that was self-regulating. That's so, if they're truly independent and truly free of conflict of interest. As a member of the Law Society of Upper Canada, I can tell you that we are very well regulated by our organization, which is composed of members of the bar as well as members of the public.

My comment would be that if this is to be truly meaningful, you need input from the teachers, of course, but you also need input from the members of the public, and to make sure that you stay free of conflict of interest. In this situation, where the teachers' unions are going to have so much input into what's going on in the college of teachers as a governing body when they're also generally regulating and representing defendants at hearings, we wonder how free of conflict of interest they're going to be.

Those are my comments.



**The Acting Speaker:** The member from Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Aldershot.

**Mr. McMeekin:** I want to take a moment to thank my colleague from Simcoe–Grey, my good friend from Hamilton East—

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi (Northumberland):** Your former friend.

**Mr. McMeekin:** —still my friend; always my friend—my colleague from London–Fanshawe, my new friend from Whitby–Ajax, and the minister as well, for their helpful comments along the way.

I don't think there are very many people in Ontario who've given education any thought at all who would seriously debate that a good, strong educational system is the building block to Ontario's future, or that it's about opportunity and trying to ensure a more equitable sharing of opportunities. Outcomes will always be different, but opportunities should be pretty equitable.

It occurs to me that in a world where we can purchase raw resources, copy technology and borrow capital, the only real advantage we have as a society and as a country is a creative, well-educated, entrepreneurial workforce that can take us into the next century. Brain building is critical too, but the simple political reality is that we need to compete in today's world. We're prepared to go into that, affirming Best Start programs and hoping that those on the other side of the House will get on board with that, but also recognizing that when all is said and done, we're prepared to go the results-based route. We're betting that all of the strengths of the emerging educational system will in fact help us to solve the problems that we have.

We've been consultative, participatory and student-based in our focus. We intend to proceed in a way that will strengthen our system for all Ontarians.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr. Norm Miller (Parry Sound–Muskoka):** It's my pleasure to add some comments today on Bill 78, which is the Education Statute Law Amendment Act (Student Performance). I'm pleased to add some comments to that bill. The one section that I wanted to focus on in terms of this bill—

**Mr. Cameron Jackson (Burlington):** Ask for standing down the lead.

**Mr. Miller:** And if I could also ask for unanimous consent to stand down our lead time on this bill, please.

**The Acting Speaker:** Is there unanimous consent to stand down the lead? Agreed.

**Mr. Miller:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Jackson:** And Madam Clerk.

**Mr. Miller:** And Madam Clerk.

The section that I would like to focus on is this section of Bill 78, this omnibus education bill, that passes control of the college of teachers over to the teachers' unions. My basic question on that would be, how does that help the students? I think we would all agree that in bringing about changes to the education system, we want to see results for students. We want to see them learning better. We want to see them being able to compete and have the skills necessary to compete in an increasingly complex

world. So how does handing control of the college of teachers over to the federation of teachers help the students? My answer to that question would be that it doesn't. It hurts them.

I would like to use in my arguments not only my opinion on this but those of members of all three parties. I note that there was a filming of the TVO program Studio 2 on this question. They had three past Ministers of Education on the program: Dave Cooke from the NDP, Bette Stephenson from the PC Party, and Sean Conway, the former Liberal Minister of Education. I think when people are gone from politics, they tend to be a little less partisan. If anybody has watched Studio 2, they all do a great job of giving insight in terms of what's going on. It's interesting to note that when that program focused on education and the issue was discussed, all three former Ministers of Education thought it was a bad idea that control of the college of teachers is being handed over to the teachers' unions. I think that is worth noting.

I'd like to quote from the actual program. I have the transcript of the program, a couple of bits which I think illuminate that. When asked about this situation, the response from Dave Cooke of the NDP was, "Not more power, total power. They have now made a decision at the college of teachers that the head of the council, who is a union rep or a union person, is going to be full time, looking over the shoulders of the registrar. Crazy." Sean Conway adds, "The college of teachers already has a majority of the profession on the council. The difference is that the omnibus bill now says we're going to add five more from the unions, which will now give a majority to the unions on the council, which is a completely different concept." Bette Stephenson adds, "Far too many, far too many under the influence of the federation of teachers."

Dave Cooke gives a practical example of what this will mean. "A practical implication: There are discipline hearings. When a discipline hearing happens, right now a majority of the federation—there is not a majority of the federation on the discipline panel, but there is a majority of teachers. It might be a director and so forth. At the same panel, there will be a lawyer hired by the federation to protect the teacher. So now you're going to have a majority of people from the federation passing judgment on the discipline hearing that their federation is fighting. It doesn't make sense."

Going on in the program, Bette Stephenson is asked by Sean Conway about recurrent training of teachers. He poses a question to her: "Bette, looking back at my time at the ministry, which was not as long or nearly as colourful as yours, I wish I had spent more time thinking about and dealing with teacher education, because when I think about my nearly 30 years in the Legislature, we had a lot of time and energy spent on education, but we spent precious little time on teacher education. Where are we on that in your view?" She goes on to say that she thinks we've stalled at this time.

On that point, I would like to note that the past PC government acted on the Royal Commission on Learn-



ing, which I believe was Gerry Caplan of the NDP, around 1993. That royal commission's report was acted on by the past Harris government, and a lot of their recommendations were the changes that happened in the educational system. They were geared towards trying to increase the outcomes for students. One of the bills that this McGuinty government did away with was a bill that required recurrent training for teachers and teacher testing, but the goal of that bill was to have better outcomes for students.

Just about any profession you name has recurrent training. I fly. I'm a pilot. If you're a commercial pilot—and I am a commercial pilot, although I don't use it on a regular basis. I fly for fun. Basically, with flying and with lots of other things, you've got to use it or lose it. You've got to be proficient at it and be doing it on a regular basis to be good at it. To be current at any profession, you have to be learning about changes going on in the profession. Whether you're a doctor or a pilot—if you're a pilot, I'm familiar with that. If you're an instrument commercial pilot, you have to do recurrent training once a year and also do a test. It's just part of the job. Obviously, if you're flying in an airliner, you'd probably be comforted by knowing that the pilot has done and passed his recurrent training.

Are our students any less important to us? I would say they're very important and we want to see the best results possible. Unfortunately, this government did away with the recurrent training and the teacher testing that was put in place by the past Progressive Conservative government and recommended by the Royal Commission on Learning from the NDP government. Now they're handing control of the college of teachers over to the teachers' union. That is not going to benefit students. We should be doing things that are going to improve education and benefit students, and we are not with this bill. So I wanted to highlight that in the short time I have to speak on this bill.

**1930**

I would also like to talk about something particular to my riding at this time, and that is the fact that there are a lot of students in the riding of Parry Sound–Muskoka who at this time are not receiving any education whatsoever, and that is the elementary students looked after by the Near North District School Board. That is because the long-term occasional teachers are on strike in the Near North District School Board, which affects most of the Parry Sound area. I don't think it's fair that the students are suffering as the occasional teachers are bargaining. It might be very legitimate concerns they're bargaining for, but I don't think it's fair that the students are the ones who are suffering. I know I'm receiving a lot of frustration expressed to me through e-mails and letters from people from my riding, so I would like to outline some of that frustration in some letters I'm receiving.

I received a letter from Pam Stoneman. "Frustrated Parent" is the way she signs it. She states:

"I would like to know why my three public school-aged children are being punished because the Near North

District School Board is refusing to ratify an agreement with its occasional teachers. It is my understanding, and you can correct me if I am misinformed, that the other 30 school boards in Ontario have already ratified similar agreements and ours refuses to. There is talk amongst parents, teachers and staff that this will affect my child's year. It is my understanding that this could cause my children to have to go to school this summer in order to be credited with this school year.

"This whole thing is ridiculous, closing schools because there is the possibility that maybe one class in our school may need a supply teacher...."

She goes on to say, "When will this end? I just received word via the school bus driver that they have been told they will not be working at all next week because the schools will remain closed all week...."

"My husband and I work full-time. Child care is a nightmare with an on-again, off-again strike such as this one.

"I want answers and I want something done.

"Pam Stoneman, Frustrated Parent."

It is true, in a riding like Parry Sound–Muskoka, a large northern rural area, that it makes it very difficult in a situation where husband and wife are both working and transportation is a big deal, trying to make arrangements. I just don't think it's fair to the students or the family in a situation like this where the students suffer.

Another e-mail I've received states:

"I ask that you continue to ensure the board puts the needs of students first. Students need to be in school, learning. This disruption of their education deeply concerns me as our schools already struggle to meet the challenges of the provincial curriculum."

Another e-mail I've received:

"This has gone on far too long and shouldn't even be happening. How can a school board close all the elementary schools in its district due to a walkout of 'occasional' teachers? Obviously our definition of 'occasional' is far different from what they interpret. I have contacted the Minister of Education, but have not had a reply. What is going on? Why are the schools closed? Do we only have 'occasional' teachers on staff in this school board area? Now we have been told that the elementary schools in the Near North board may not be reopened, and the children will lose their school year. This is unacceptable...."

"We pay a large portion of our taxes towards education and don't seem to get any of this money back when schools are not open. It is time for someone to take responsibility for this lack of education for our elementary students. We don't care what the whys or the wherefores are; just open our schools."

That's from Gail and Robert McKowen in Parry Sound. You can see a lot of frustration there.

Another e-mail, from Karen and Greg Hobson, saying:

"My name is ... Karen Hobson and I am writing to you because of my concerns regarding the Near North District School Board closing our elementary schools in this district.



"My husband, Gregory, and I have three elementary school-aged children that have had their year interrupted by the strike and lockout of the occasional teachers within the Near North board. It is our understanding the schools will continue to be closed this week, May 22 to May 26, and that this may now affect our children's entire year.

"We do not understand how a total of 275 occasional teachers in the board, 60 here in the schools in the Parry Sound area, can close an entire board. What are our full-time teachers doing? How can the board say they cannot safely teach our children with these occasional teachers on strike? Obviously their definition of 'occasional' and mine are completely different.

"My husband and I feel that something must be done; this situation is not acceptable. We are asking for your help in this matter. We do feel that our schools" do not "have to be closed as negotiations continue. Surely there are enough full-time teachers to handle our kids. Greg and I feel it is time for the Minister of Education to step in and reopen the schools and get the negotiations back on track.

"Once again, these 'professionals' are holding our children as hostages by threatening their entire school year. Enough is enough; it's time for the kids to be back in school.

"Feel free to use my husband's and my name, as well as this e-mail, when you talk to the Minister of Education. Thank you.

"Karen and Greg Hobson" from Parry Sound.

Just a sample of some of the e-mails I've been receiving to do with the occasional teachers' strike in the Near North District School Board. I agree. I don't think it's fair to the students involved, especially so close to the end of the school year, that they are being held hostage, their education is being affected and complete lives are being disrupted as families have to scramble to find child care and make transportation arrangements. It's just not fair.

I did ask the Minister of Education today in question period about what she was going to do to get involved to try to bring an end to the strike. Her answer, as I read it over, is fairly vague, a very political answer, I'm afraid: happy that some schools are reopening but not really saying anything definite about how she has been involved. She kind of skated around saying what specifically she was doing to bring an end to the strike; not really assuring to those people in Parry Sound.

I might note that the school board chair, back on May 19, did a press release and formally asked the Minister of Education to get involved. I wish she would get directly involved and bring an end to the strike so the kids don't suffer.

The May 19 media release from the Near North District School Board:

"Schools Remain Closed—Board Chair Calls upon the Minister for Assistance." A plea for help.

"The Near North District School Board does not see an early resolution of the current job action by its

occasional teachers." It goes on to tell parents to try to make arrangements for caregivers.

"Today, board chair Alan Bottomley will call upon the Minister of Education to intervene. Our students have already lost a significant number of days due to power outages and inclement weather." I think that's something very much worth noting: that in the Parry Sound area this year we've had many power outages to do with storms. I won't blame the McGuinty government's hydro and energy policy for that one, but we have had many power outages. We've also had many missed days because of weather. Because of that, obviously the students just can't afford to miss any more time from school whatsoever.

Not a lot of comfort from the minister's answer today. All I can do is ask the minister to become directly involved to help bring this strike to an end. We have to put the interests of the students first and get the kids back to school, particularly when it's so close to the end of the school year. It's not fair to all the families and the kids involved in this strike, and I implore the government to bring an end to the strike and get the kids back to school.

**The Acting Speaker:** Questions and comments?

**Ms. Horwath:** I'm pleased to make a few comments on the speech by the member from Parry—Parry Sound—Muskoka. I can't say it, but I like to go there from time to time.

Nonetheless, interestingly enough, the member spent a great deal of his speech talking about what's turning out to be quite a controversial little issue, and that's the issue of the college of teachers. There was a heck of a lot of concern brought forward by the member about the college of teachers, an inference that there are going to be these great powers. There are fearful tones coming out about the fact that the union is going to be running or in control or in charge of this college because it has the majority of votes. Of course, we don't have a problem with that in terms of thinking that teachers are responsible people, able to look at their role very responsibly.

However, the government, in response to that kind of criticism that came from the Tories, turned around and did something totally different and put something else into the mix. In fact, what they did was put a new little piece into the mix, which is called a conflict of interest committee or a conflict of interest—

**Mr. Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina):** Public interest.

**Ms. Horwath:** A public interest committee, it's called. What they've said is, "Teachers, now you can have a majority, but we're also putting this other little organization together here to keep an eye on you, to watchdog the work that you're doing." So interestingly enough, although they say that they trust the teachers and they want the teachers to have the majority on their college, they then turn around in response to the criticisms that are coming from the Conservatives and say, "We're going to put all these things in place because, really, we don't trust you. We think you maybe



don't have everybody's best interest at heart, and we're concerned about that."

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On the school board issue, from the local level, I think the member has brought some important things forward. I recall the members of the government, while running, saying they were not going to close any more schools, and sure enough, schools are closing left, right and centre in Ontario.

**Mr. Rinaldi:** It's a pleasure to speak for a couple of minutes about this bill that's going through third reading.

First of all, I want to say that I take pride in being able to visit a number of schools in my riding, especially when I cover a riding that has some six different school boards. The conversations that I have, not only with the students, mostly grade 5 and grade 10, but I take the opportunity to meet with the principals and the teachers whenever I'm at a school, and I'll tell you, it's almost like you have a red carpet when you go into a school right now.

I'm not going to make excuses that there aren't some concerns—of course, whenever you have a structure of that magnitude, there always are—but the other piece is that we are listening. We're listening, we're acting and we're doing right things. The fact of stability with school teachers—they were in fear of not knowing where they were going to be tomorrow, whether they were going to be at school or walking a picket line.

Just to switch a little bit, because I know we only have a couple of minutes: the trustees. These folks get elected. They're hard-working. I meet with them on a regular basis as well because we believe in a true partnership with those folks. They're there to deliver the education this government and the people of Ontario expect them to deliver, so to recognize them for the hard work they do and to give them some more assurances of things they can do, this bill addresses those things. I think it's for the right things. We keep on saying education is very important. They were so used to getting beat up all the time before; it's time that we show some respect and move forward.

**Mr. John O'Toole (Durham):** It's a pleasure to have one or two minutes to respond to the member. In his comments, he was really talking quite personally about a situation in his own riding in Parry Sound–Muskoka. Today he asked a question of the minister, but I'm not sure he got a very satisfactory answer.

I listened to the member for Northumberland, and how far away he is from reality. Most boards, he would know—and I've met with the boards in my area. There are some six boards in my area: French and English, public and separate, and then there's a Durham component and a Peterborough component. I think what I'm hearing from most of them is they're in serious, serious financial trouble.

**Mr. Marchese:** Is that right?

**Mr. O'Toole:** In almost every single board, as the member from Trinity–Spadina would know, the special education portion of their budget, the transportation

portion of their budget and the salary gap issue are huge, huge issues. They're all waiting for the GLGs to be announced so they can figure out how much of that \$7,000, the gap on the grid as well as the formula, is there. They had promised to fund education. In fact, they've allowed more wage increase into the system.

I don't think anyone wants to dispute that, but they're trying to paint a rosy picture artificially. Do you know what I'm saying? The member from Northumberland said there's a red carpet. He really meant red ink, because every board in this province is in deficit.

*Interjections.*

**Mr. O'Toole:** The member from Guelph–Wellington should know—they're squawking now; they don't want to hear the truth. The truth is, peace at any price. It's sort of like Neville Chamberlain's famous speech just before they bombed London. But I would expect we'll see something on this in October 2007, because the relationship with this holy alliance will become your biggest nemesis.

**Mr. David Oraziotti (Sault Ste. Marie):** It's a pleasure to be here this evening to make a few comments with respect to third reading of Bill 78 and to comment on the remarks of the member for Parry Sound–Muskoka earlier.

There seems to be some concern around the Ontario College of Teachers arising from some of the comments made by the members of the Conservative Party, but I can tell you as a former teacher, having been in education for 10 years, that the college was something that was seen by many teachers as an unduly and overly politicized college that really did not represent the interests of teachers and safeguard the public interest. That is something now that in Bill 78 we are prepared to do. It's something that we think is the right thing to do, and we think that teachers are capable of doing the right thing when it comes to self-regulation with respect to the college.

I should also say that when the standing committee reviewed the colleges and regulatory bodies to report back to the standing committee, there were 60 colleges and regulatory bodies reviewed: dentists' organizations, the law society, the Ontario College of Physicians and Surgeons, pharmacists, and the like. If you asked which one has the lowest percentage of working professionals as members, the answer is teachers. Even as newly proposed, with 51% being working teachers, it is still the lowest of the 60 organizations. And when you have 4% of teachers turning out to actually vote in elections for the college of teachers, it tells you that something is very wrong with the college of teachers and needs to be changed.

We are pleased that we are moving forward with a college that is non-political and that removes the union membership from the college, that you truly have teachers representing the public interest as well as monitoring themselves.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Parry Sound–Muskoka has two minutes.



**Mr. Miller:** It's a pleasure to respond to the comments from the members for Hamilton East, Northumberland, Durham and Sault Ste. Marie.

The member for Sault Ste. Marie talked about the college of teachers, and I would like to point out that I was quoting from three different parties, three different former Ministers of Education, all highly respected people: Dave Cooke from the NDP, Sean Conway from the Liberal Party, and Bette Stephenson from the PC Party, all of whom think this is a bad idea. So it's not my words; it was their words. They all think it's a bad idea. I think it's worth listening to those three respected people from three different parties who are no longer involved with the political system, so they are less partisan than perhaps we are.

One of the things this bill talks about is class size. I had the opportunity with the Legislature to visit Alaska and to attend the Council of State Governments, and I got the opportunity to sit in on the education seminar. They had a federal US expert talking about education. One of the questions from the audience was to do with class size and how important it is. Of course it's important, and you get better outcomes with smaller class sizes, but it's not the most important thing. It's better to have smaller classes, certainly, but this bill is allowing the government to break another election promise, to break their hard-cap promise, get around that. The hard-cap promise was a bad idea to begin with; let's face it. Yes, we want smaller class sizes, but a hard cap is a bad idea, just like it was a bad idea to say you were going to shut down coal-fired generation in 2007, before you had a replacement for it.

**Hon. George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** Because you did nothing.

**Mr. Miller:** We could go on and list many, many other things, and I'm sure the Minister of Health would like to list some of them himself.

I'm out of time now, so I will pass on to Mr. Marchese from the NDP, who I know is going to talk to us a lot more about this Bill 78. Thank you very much.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr. Marchese:** I want to welcome, as usual, the citizens who are watching this political program. We are on live. It's almost 10 to 8, and we're going to be here for another hour and a half, more or less, give or take.

I've got to tell you, every time we deal with educational issues it's an interest for me to stand up and talk about the revolution that the member for Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Aldershot said the Liberals are engaged in. There is no revolution; I can tell you that. There may be some evolutionary changes here and there that I will comment on, but that it's not a revolution, I can guarantee. I can also guarantee that this bill does nothing to boost performance of students.

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You will have heard, those of you who are watching—about an hour ago, when the minister introduced this bill, she said, "This is about boosting the performance of students." There is nothing in this bill—and I defy all of the members who are here, including some former

trustees and other teachers, to point to any aspect of this bill which speaks about performance of students and how the performance of students is going to be increased by the mere mentioning of any of the issues outlined in this bill. There is absolutely nothing. So you've got the minister and the parliamentary assistant talking about a revolution and talking about the key to improving student performance, Bill 78, but there is nothing.

I will point out that there are a couple of things I agree with in this bill, but after I mention the couple of things I agree with I will focus all of my attention on what I find particularly disturbing about the bill.

I have to say the teacher induction programs are good. And it's better than the teacher testing imposed by the previous government. Recall: The previous government, otherwise known as the Conservative Party, said that we needed to test incoming teachers so that we could feel good about their abilities. Some of you may or may not know that 99% of those new teachers being tested by the previous Conservative government passed the test, which suggests to me, at least, that we were wasting our time, money and attention on giving a test to new teachers for so very little value, except that it makes a whole lot of Tories feel good to say, "We are testing them, you see? We're good, you're bad. We are making teachers accountable, the others are not, and therefore re-elect us for the next election because we'll do it again." That argument about the teacher test was baseless, political in nature and not pedagogical at all.

So the government has done a good job of getting rid of that test. We, in opposition with the Liberals at the time, opposed it. The government has eliminated that test and introduced this induction program for teachers. We think that's good. Is this really a big, big deal? I've got to tell you, it's not much of a big deal in my view. Would you call this a revolution? I wouldn't call it a revolution. Would you say this is better? Yes. Well, when you look at what you had before, and what you're putting in now, okay, marginally better, because we think it's pedagogically better than the political stuff that the Tories did. But please don't call it a revolution.

They are giving an honorarium to student trustees, which is good. Why? Because they deserve it, because they put in a great deal of time representing students. I would remind you that boards and provincial governments—this one and the previous one—give no or give little or gave none by way of support to student trustees. In fact, students said, when they came in front of the committee, that the majority of students don't know who they are or what they do, and they would love to put out some information explaining who they are and what some of their powers might be and why they are there. Boards could be helpful and the province could spend a couple of bucks to say to the student trustees, "We want to help you publicize who you are; we want to be able to publish some information that explains the role of school trustees." But you're not doing that, and boards are not doing that. It costs a few dollars and boards are broke.



The province loves to honour trustees and gives them very little support.

But now, they are going to be offering a \$5,000 honorarium. Is the government offering the \$5,000 honorarium? No, you're not. Nowhere in this bill or in discussion in committee was it ever stated by the parliamentary assistant, who is close to me, or the minister, or any other Liberal member in that committee, that the honorarium for these school trustees would be paid for by the government. In fact, the government will say, "Our boards have loads of money. They can dip into this and into that, and they'll be able to pay the student trustees." They're broke, but the government will say, "We give them lots of money to be able to take from ESL, special ed and so on."

So yes, there is money to be stolen from other programs to be able to give the honorarium for student trustees. Okay. Good thing you're giving student trustees in our area; bad thing that the money is likely to come from ESL, special ed, the French-as-a-second-language program, or indeed any other program that at the moment is under threat with the Liberal revolution imposed upon school boards.

So these are two good things. I can hardly say that they're a revolution, but they're nice things. It recognizes that they're better than what the previous government had before.

The third thing is that they're finally recognizing, after three years in their mandate, close to the end of their mandate, that trustees serve an important function.

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** Renewal time.

**Mr. Marchese:** Sorry, George? With my help?

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Marchese:** They're finally recognizing that trustees are an important political part of the educational structure and, as such, they're going to get an increase in their pay, assuming boards pass a motion saying that they can. The government says, "They can; we will impose a cap." We haven't seen a figure, but by regulation they will impose a cap on what trustees can earn. But they have to force boards to go out again and consult their parents as to the increase the trustees may or may not be entitled to, based on a political meeting. You want them to go out to parents and say, "Look, the government says we can raise our salaries, but we needed to come and chat with you." Imagine saying, "We, as boards, are broke," and you, the trustees, have to go out there and say to the parents, "We think we deserve a little raise, because we work hard." And they do. But in the climate of boards being broke, they have to go out and tell the parents, "Please, we need a raise. Do you agree?" What are parents going to say in some of these boards? Are they going to say, "Yes, we're happy to give you an increase even though we know you're broke, even though we know that your reserves are empty, even though we know that you're dipping into ESL, special ed, the French-as-a-second-language program and God knows what else? We're happy to give you an increase in your trustees' salaries"?

You understand what I'm saying, Speaker. It's a problemo, right? If you agree to give trustees an increase and you impose it, a cap at least, it will allow the boards to go out there and say, "Pass a motion. Okay, we're done," because the provincial government says it's okay. But, no, they've got to go through a consultative process to get beaten up by parents for increasing their salaries. If they get beaten up and they're not going to get a salary increase, too bad, so sad. The government can say, "Well, we tried. We put it in the bill. You can have it; just go out and get it." Former Minister Kennedy was happy to oblige and was happy to throw them to the wolves. "Go get 'em, boys. Go get your pay increase. Here you go." Gerard was a clever guy, I've got to tell you—a clever, clever, clever guy.

But not to minimize this, at least they have the potential to increase their salary, because they deserve it. Trustees and some boards work on a full-time basis, and in some boards parents demand that trustees be there on a full-time basis. They don't understand when you don't return their call. They don't like it when you don't return their call. In fact, they demand that you return their calls because you got elected as a school trustee. Whether you make \$5,000 or not, it's not their problem. You got elected, so you've got to serve. The potential salary increase for trustees is good. The process, in my view, is hurtful and bad because trustees are going to be most surely attacked by the parents out there. That makes them, in my view, vulnerable.

So these three things are okay. They're good, positive features of the bill.

Now let me get to the other components of the bill, because there's so much to say—to attack, mostly.

The bill begins with the collection of personal information: The minister may collect, directly or indirectly, such personal information as is reasonably necessary for purposes related to "administering this act and the regulations, and implementing the policies and guidelines made under this act ... ensuring compliance with this act, the regulations, and the policies and guidelines made under this act." And it goes on.

**2000**

The question I was asking that they simply could not answer is, what kind of information are you collecting? Is it on students? Is it on teachers? How will this information be stored? Where will it be stored? To whom will it be made available? Will private operators have access? Will parents and teachers have to sign release forms? Can they refuse to have that information collected? No one could answer: not the staff; not the PA, with all due respect; not the other members of that committee. No one could answer. They're members of the committee. They're not given all of the information that they're entitled to, and even if they were, they might not want to be able to tell you what they're collecting, because it could be a conflict. It could be something that could damage them. So even if they knew, they wouldn't be able to tell you, but because I didn't get any answers



whatsoever, they just didn't have a clue. But we were there asking the tough questions.

So they're going to be collecting data on students that most school boards collect, for one reason or another, at the moment, yet this government is introducing some other central component of collection of data because the government deems that to be okay; centralizing information under the Liberals is okay. If the Tories were collecting information centrally, the Liberals simply would not like it, but if Liberals are collecting information centrally, it must be okay. Why? Because they're Liberals, and Liberals are good people, as you all know, and they wouldn't collect information for deleterious reasons or damaging reasons, or for any nefarious reasons. They're simply collecting information for the public good, for the provincial interest, for the public interest, and blah blah blah, as you might understand.

I just wanted to point out for the record that if Tories were collecting it, you'd be attacked. Mon ami M. Gerard Kennedy, qui n'est pas ici avec nous parce qu'il est plus important, va chercher une position plus importante parce qu'il est un homme important etc. Mais je suis content qu'il n'est pas ici avec nous pour partager ses expériences, pour partager tout ce qu'il sait de notre système de l'éducation. That is the first part of this bill connected to the collection of personal information.

Oh, by the way, they had an amendment in committee. Because they got nervous about what people might have been saying, they have some clause that says, "The minister shall not collect or use more personal information than is reasonably necessary to meet the purpose of the collection or use." So they thought, "Just in case we did something bad with the original language"—they then put in another amendment saying, "The minister shall not collect or use more personal information than is reasonably necessary...." For us to know later, when the regulations come out, as to what reasonably may or may not be, as to what information may be reasonable or not—we don't have a clue. The government, by regulation, will be able to collect whatever it is they want. God bless the Liberals. Don't you love them? Yes, everybody loves Liberals.

Moving on: I've got to tell you, it would be lovely to have an Ombudsman in this particular case. I've introduced Bill 90, which would have oversight of the educational system by the Ombudsman. Similarly, my colleague from Hamilton East put in Bill 89, or 88—

**Ms. Horwath:** Eighty-nine.

**Mr. Marchese:**—I think it's 89, which would give the Ombudsman oversight of—

**Ms. Horwath:** Children's aid societies.

**Mr. Marchese:**—children's aid societies. Why? Because at the moment they are completely independent, and they are independent of government. We have no power. Nobody can dig into the problems that children's aid societies are involved in, may be involved in or have been involved in. So the member from Hamilton East introduced a bill that would have the Ombudsman do a review, have oversight over children's aid societies.

Because we all know the multitude of problems that exist in that public institution, or not-so-public institution. Similarly, in our education system, when a parent has a problem that he or she cannot resolve with the principal, with the superintendent, assuming the person is able enough to progress through the system, with the trustee, with the board—if you can't do that and you're already frustrated as a parent, where do you go? There's nowhere else to go. We feel the Ombudsman should have oversight over education issues so that he or she—the parent—would be able to go to someone, to the Ombudsman, for redress. We think it's a good thing.

Why wouldn't the government, the good Liberals, support such a bill? Why wouldn't they support it? I just cannot fathom their objections to having an Ombudsman having oversight over education and children's aid societies. Yet we have been stymied by the good Liberals for quite some time. Here is an area where, if we had an Ombudsman, someone to whom people could run on the basis of, "What is it you're collecting information about that may be damaging to me?"—I want to be able to go to someone and have him or her address my issue. I wanted to throw in the fact that, wouldn't it be nice to have the Ombudsman there just to be able to have the oversight that we so desperately need?

Moving on, because I want to focus on the bill, the next section of the bill deals with regulations regarding provincial interest. That's page 2 of the bill. You recall that the minister was here just a few moments ago—an hour and a half ago or so—when she said that the one-size-fits-all that the Tories introduced when they were in government was wrong, and they are breaking that bad habit. She said that, didn't she? I was here. Yet when you look at this "Regulations re provincial interest," it's all about the one-size-fits-all; it's all about micro-managing; it's all about centralizing the educational interest at the provincial level. The minister said it's about improving student performance, and it's not. She said, "We are, through this bill, eliminating the one-size-fits-all," which was a policy introduced by the Conservative government, yet here we have, on page 2 of the bill, "Regulations re provincial interest," and it's about one-size-fits-all regulation. What does it say? "The Lieutenant Governor in Council may make regulations prescribing, respecting and governing the duties of boards, so as to further and promote the provincial interest in education." This is about promoting a provincial interest. Is it about flexibility? Is it about reflecting what boards may or may not be doing, could or should be doing at the board level? It's not. It's about "prescribing, respecting and governing the duties of boards, so as to further and promote the provincial interest in education."

"A regulation made under subsection (1) may require a board to,

"(a) adopt and implement measures specified in the regulation to ensure that the board's funds and other resources are applied,

"(i) effectively, and

"(ii) in compliance with this act...



"(b) adopt and implement measures specified in the regulation to ensure that the board achieves student outcomes specified in the regulation."

What do they mean by "outcomes"? Is this about the student test that this government loves, as did the previous Conservative government? Is this about the test that the Liberals are talking about, where they want to improve student measures by shortening the student test by half, from 12 hours to six hours? Is this about the same test where students can now use calculators for complex mathematics questions and simple mathematics questions? Is this about the very test that has been simplified in order to get the results that the Liberals are talking about, which is to have students achieve at or above a standard, to have 75% of students achieve at or above that standard? Remember, that standard was at 55% when the Tories were in power. Remember too that in order to get to a 75% level, meaning to be at and/or to surpass the provincial standard, it takes a great deal of work. It takes more work than teachers can do; it takes a lot more work done outside our educational system. It requires good housing so kids have a good place to live and stay. It requires that if for some unfortunate reason you are on welfare, you get the benefits you deserve, to have some quality of life.

**2010**

We are not all lucky enough in this world to be gainfully employed, to be able to go out and find employment. We are not all lucky enough not to have a mental illness. Fifteen per cent of the public have a mental illness; that's a huge number of people. They may not look as if they are mentally ill, but they are, and they're on welfare. They're entitled to have some decent social assistance from government. The government claimed that that's what they were going to do; they claimed they were going to end the clawback at the national level. The federal government gives money to people who are on welfare, and the provincial government—the Liberals, like the Tories—steals that approximately \$1,500 a year from individuals who otherwise need it and could use it, and these good Liberals make the claim that they are using this money for all sorts of good things that welfare people may or may not need.

People on welfare deserve a break; people on welfare deserve to get some decent support from government. We hoped that the Liberals were going to do it, and they haven't.

**Ms. Horwath:** So kids can go to school ready to learn.

**Mr. Marchese:** So kids can go to school ready to learn, with good housing and some good food on the table that's healthy, and not unhealthy, so they don't get to school unprepared. Living in squalor in some of this public housing that is waiting for the \$225 million the Liberals were saying they would flow through so that buildings could be fixed, one of the very buildings where George Smitherman, the Minister of Health, went and slept to show how good a Liberal he was, to see the kind of squalor they live in—225 million bucks that the Liberals were saying would flow to fix those buildings.

Those buildings are still not fixed, eh, George? Thank God we have good Liberals here who are worried—

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** Regent Park: I was there.

**Mr. Marchese:** I know. We're glad it's being redeveloped—I'm not sure with what provincial money. How much money are you guys giving?

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** I was there with \$9 million.

**Mr. Marchese:** He was there with \$9 million. This is happening with federal dollars, to a great extent, and with the creativity of Toronto Community Housing; not initiated by the provincial government but by Toronto Community Housing, so Regent Park will be redeveloped for the good. Some of you fine Liberals smiling about the squalor in public housing should go and check it out.

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** We're there all the time.

**Mr. Marchese:** I know George is there all the time. That's why we expect more from you, George. We expect much more from you: to convince the Minister of Housing to deliver the money to fix all the other public housing units that are waiting for you—

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** We're building new housing.

**Mr. Marchese:** George says, "We're building new housing." The Speaker knows, because we've been critical of the Liberals for quite some time—three years—and only now are we seeing a trickle of projects coming down: 10 here, 19 there. But you didn't see the minister announcing all the thousands of public housing units coming on board prior to this month. You didn't hear it because they weren't coming. You heard the Minister of Housing say, "We built 5,000 units of public housing." It's not true. It's not public housing they've been building; it's rental housing that accommodates the very well-to-do.

I don't want to waste too much time on things that are not connected to the bill too much. Moving on:

"Regulations re provincial interest

"In compliance with this act, the regulations and the policies and guidelines made under this act;

"adopt and implement measures specified in the regulation to ensure that the board achieves student outcomes ..."

I spoke to that. The student outcome is about manipulating the student test—nothing short of the manipulation of the student test. Those grades will improve because, as the previous government did, this government is changing the test to make sure the test results are increased to the levels that the Liberals have decreed. That's what this is about. It's about decreeing that the boards and the teachers will achieve the outcomes that the Liberals have prescribed. That's what this is about: making sure boards do what Liberals want them to do provincially.

"adopt and implement measures specified in the regulation to encourage involvement by parents of pupils of the board in education matters specified in the regulation;

"adopt and implement measures specified in the regulation with respect to the provision of special ed..."



I've got to tell you that this concerns me, because we believe—and I believe strongly—the government is about to, yes, revolutionize special ed but not in the way that some of you think. They will revolutionize special ed in this way: making sure less money gets to the boards to deal with kids who have special needs. This is what this is about. It's reducing the incidence rates of those who are identified as special ed. In fact, I predict most students or many students will not be identified by an identification placement review committee because they will be thrown into classrooms and they will force the teachers to teach them, no matter what. This is about saving money.

This is about setting provincial interests and setting these interests centrally in a way that I believe undermines the stated purpose of this government, which was to provide the boards with the flexibility they deserve. This bill does not give the flexibility; in fact, this section takes away much of the power from boards and administers centrally.

I can recall Gerard Kennedy saying, "The main role of school boards is to adapt provincial standards to the needs of students in local communities. We will ensure that they have the resources and the flexibility in spending those resources to respond to local needs. We will respect and enhance decision-making powers at the school level."

That's what Gerard used to say when he was here. This section contradicts what Gerard said.

*Applause.*

**Mr. Marchese:** I know you're clapping the contradiction, but that's what it was. This contradicts Monsieur Kennedy's remarks about giving boards the powers and the flexibility they need, including the resources they need. This section takes all that away.

The Toronto board spoke against this section strongly. People for Education said this section should be eradicated, should be deleted from this bill. What did the government do by way of an amendment? They said, "Well, we'll consult." So they actually put in an amendment that said, "We will consult." What good is consulting if the government is going to do what it wants anyway to protect its provincial interest? What good is consulting if the government has already made its decision as to what they will do?

**Ms. Kathleen O. Wynne (Don Valley West):** It's not consulting. That may be how you define it.

**Mr. Marchese:** Oh, no. That's the way you're defining it. I don't see it any other way. I can't imagine that the government is going to say to the Toronto board, "Listen, we've got some ideas in mind, but we just want to chat with you about what we're doing." The Toronto board says, "Well, we disagree." What is Kathleen Wynne going to say when they say they disagree?

**Interjection:** Ask her.

**Mr. Marchese:** She's going to have two minutes. We'll see what she says.

So the Toronto board says, "We disagree." She's going to say, "Well, too bad, so sad, but we did consult

you, didn't we?" You go out there and you tell them, "We consulted you. Even though you might disagree, we consulted," and the Liberals feel good. You see, they put these things in and they say, "No, but a number of boards said that's what they wanted." They put it in, thinking they have calmed the waters and dealt with the issue. New Democrats say you haven't dealt with it by simply doing that. The Toronto Board of Education chair said this is one of the most dangerous things she has ever seen, although she didn't repeat that in the committee. The two trustees who came to the committee, Bruce Davis and the chair, Ms. Ward, spoke strongly against this bill, and I suspect the parliamentary assistant, Ms. Wynne, might speak to that.

**2020**

What more is in this bill? We have the college of teachers, where the government has determined, and for good reasons, that the majority on the college of teachers should be teachers. The majority is one. It's not a lot, it's not what Monsieur Kennedy had promised, but it at least gives them a majority. I think it's a good thing.

Unlike so many others, former members of the college of teachers came to the committee to decry these changes. One of them actually said that this is like giving away everything to the unions, because there is one teacher on that board that flips the balance to teachers over the others, and that they're giving in to the unions.

If any one of those members is affiliated and is performing the duties of a union members, recall that this government says they cannot be part of the college of teachers. Recall that. In spite of the objections of many of the federations who said that that does not respect them as federations, they're not entitled to go there as federation members. They can go in as teachers, but not as federation members and/or as a union.

I asked one of the members, "Are you saying that when teachers go there individually as teachers, they are 'the union,' as if they were the union?" He said yes. Quite frankly, I am prepared to say, for the record, that many of those teachers who go there, go there as teachers. Some of them may be reflecting the perspective of the federations that they are members of, but my suspicion is they go there as teachers.

They said, some of the deputants as well as the Tories, "This is the worst thing that could happen." Sorry, I just don't see it. The Liberals haven't defended this very well, and I'm not sure why I'm defending it for them. I haven't heard in second reading Liberals defend this with vigour, clarity or strength. It happens to be a New Democrat who is defending what they're doing. But I'm glad to do it, because I quite frankly believe that when those teachers go on the college of teachers, they are there to protect the interest of students.

Where a teacher makes a decision on some teacher who is accused of child abuse, I do not believe for a moment that any teacher in the right frame of mind would be able to say, "I'm going to protect the child abuser because he or she is a teacher." I just don't see it. I just don't know what makes some Tories and others



believe that once a teacher gets in there and has a majority that somehow teachers are going to defend abusers. What would possibly grip a teacher to defend any abusive person who is hurting students? I just don't get it. What other kind of decision might a teacher be making that offends some people? I don't know.

What does the college of teachers do? They certify. They issue a teacher's certificate. And they take that certificate away on the basis of something that you have done, either abuse or incompetence, or any other factor that entitles you to be gone.

It is in the interest of teachers to make sure those bad teachers do not stay in their profession. It is not in their interest to defend incompetent teachers. I quite frankly don't see what the fuss is all about.

Then we come to the other section that I so, so strongly oppose and revile with real strength. That is the public interest committee. The public interest committee shall have no fewer than three members, but they can have up to five members. I said to the Liberals members in that committee, I said it in second reading, and I say it again: They're going to be well paid. They have to be. What are they going to do? They're going to need an office, because if they're going to have oversight over the college of teachers, they're going to need an office.

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** I'll put a word in with the minister.

**Mr. Marchese:** Thanks, George.

I think they need staff support. If you have five bright men and women, one secretary just wouldn't do. You need a couple, and good ones, like George. You need some office space somewhere, and it can't be at the college of teachers because—or it could be, I suppose. Why not have the oversight committee over the oversight committee right there in the same place? Why not? You could.

As lawyers say, I put to you that this is going to be one expensive oversight committee of a college of teachers that essentially issues a teacher's certificate and takes it away. The college of teachers administers an oath presently, but they're going to have to take another oath, a different kind of Liberal oath to protect the provincial interest. Then we're going to have this other oversight committee to administer the oath. It must take a lot of work. It's going to take five competent, well-paid individuals, with staff, in some office, to administer the oath. To do oversight of what? God knows. I just don't get it.

I thought I was very persuasive the last time in second reading debate and I thought in committee I made good arguments, just to say, "What are you guys doing?" If on the one hand you say, "We've got the college of teachers and we have full trust in the teachers, really we do"—right, Ted?—and then they introduce this public interest committee, automatically, perforce saying, "We don't trust them," it's a contradictory message.

**Mr. McMeekin:** It's got nothing to do with the teachers.

**Mr. Marchese:** Ted, Ted, Ted. Yes, it does. Ted, it does. The PA has it all wrong. I know you have to defend

the minister. That's your job. You're the PA. You have to defend the minister at all cost, and I appreciate that. But you're wrong and so is the minister. You're all wrong in this regard. How can you defend spending public money that you don't have, that we don't have, to pay for an oversight committee of a college of teachers which basically issues licences and takes them away? I don't know what you people are doing. You can't be talking to me about a revolution in this regard. You can't be talking to me about student performance when you introduce measures like that, which do not speak well of you. They do not speak well of Liberals at all.

I just want to tell you this: You look bad. All of you look bad. How you could be defending it is unimaginable to me. I know you're not defending it. You put no good arguments in committee, you put no good arguments in this House and you won't put any good arguments today on third reading, because you have none. In fact, you're so embarrassed to talk about it, you prefer to avoid talking about it. But that's why Marchese is putting it up on the floor, so the good citizens of Ontario watching this are able to have the debate here, right?

Why did we have only a couple of days of hearings? So you could move this stuff fast, move it out. Talk about student performance: "This is so, so good and so revolutionary." Get it out of the way and then you can say, "Ah, Bill 78, another great achievement." There's no achievement here. There is nada here. There is very little here to brag about with this bill, with the exception of the induction program, the honoraria for the student trustees and the possibility that trustees might get a raise if the public says okay when they get consulted. Apart from those three things—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Marchese:** But the college of teachers—okay. But you see, as I keep on repeating over and over again, although I supported the college of teachers act, I just don't think their function is all that extraordinary. I know there are a lot of parents who want to have this faith that somehow the college of teachers is really doing a big job and a great job and an important job. Look, I think it's an okay institution. In fact, one of the few things that I believe the college of teachers does well in terms of its purpose is that when a teacher is fired, the college of teachers ascertains that that teacher cannot any longer go to another board. In that regard, I believe the college of teachers has introduced something that's really positive. But apart from that, please, don't exaggerate the big bureaucracy we have there simply to certify teachers, to issue a certificate and to take them away. Don't overdo it. That's why I say, when you compound it with a public interest committee, man, are you doing an incredible disservice to people.

**2030**

I want to talk about class size briefly. The government talks about maximum class sizes. I've often said in committee and in this House, why doesn't the government build in caps in this bill? There's no mention of caps. You'll hear the parliamentary assistant talk about



reducing class size. I've got to tell you, a lot of the reduction of class size is happening because we're losing kids. We have fewer and fewer kids in the educational system. So merely by attrition, we're reducing a whole lot of classes in a whole lot of places. In fact, in some places this is so damaging to boards because every time one student doesn't show up, that means we have \$7,000 less for that board. But the buildings still have to be run, heating has to be paid. Heating costs still have to be found from some special education line or from some ESL line or from FSL line, because they don't get any money for hydro. Maybe some boards get special deals from the ministry to keep them quiet, but by and large, they don't get very much.

In fact, the Toronto board is having so many difficulties with their budgets, they're resorting to looking for charities to bail them out. Can you believe that? Can you imagine a board going to a charity, saying, "Please, we need your help"? Can you imagine that? I can't. They're going to the United Way and the United Way says, "Okay, we're willing to help you. Why? Because in so many places in the city we need the services that you provide as a board." So the United Way, which gets money from people who donate, is going to give to a public institution underfunded by the provincial government to be able to provide the programs they are providing now but won't be able to provide in the future. Don't you find that laughable? Don't you just want to crack up and say, "Man, what kind of a revolution are these Liberals offering us?"

So the Toronto board is obliged to go to charity. We donate to the United Way—I think it's 20% that you get as a credit. We donate. You get a 20% credit that the government pays, and then they pass that on to the board of education that gets money from the province, but it's not enough and they have to kick in money to be able to pay for essential kinds of services. Doesn't that crack you up, Ted? It cracks me up each and every time I think about it.

The Toronto board is ready to close schools. Why? It can't afford to keep them open, because the money isn't flowing in, because that teacher salary line is so underfunded. I know the member from Don Valley West knows this very well because she was a trustee for a long time. That teacher line was underfunded when the member from Don Valley West was there as a trustee. She was there when the Tories were there. What does that mean? Teachers get a salary, and remember, 80% of what goes out of the board's finances goes out to teachers. So they're being paid. The problem is, they have not gotten the commensurate dollars to be able to pay for those teacher salaries. That teacher line has been underfunded for 10 years. So they have to rob from other programs to be able to pay for those teachers.

I'm not saying that paying teachers is bad. Teachers have to be paid. The problem is, the governments are not giving enough money to pay for that teacher line, which is 80% of all boards' money, and, as a result, they have to pilfer from other programs. They pilfer under the tutelage

and support of the provincial government that says, "It's okay. If you take money from ESL, we sanction it. It's okay." I know the member from Don Valley West. I know she feels deeply about ESL, continuing ed and adult ed. I know she does. That's why, if she were a minister, she would have a hard time with this. It's easier, as a former PA, to be able to defend special ed, ESL. "Yes, we really are for these programs and yes, we put more money." But she knows that it's not enough. The member from Guelph-Wellington knows that it's not enough, because she used to be the chair of a provincial trustee organization. She knows too, but she's not going to talk about it. She can't talk about it, because if she did, she would have to reveal, yes, indeed, we're not paying for that teacher line adequately. So neither the member from Guelph nor the member from Don Valley West can talk about it, because if they were to admit that, they would be in trouble with their own government. They have to toe the line and say, "We've given more money to boards." You haven't been giving more money to boards. Yes, relative to the Tories you have, but we haven't kept up. You recall Dr. Rozanski in 2001-02 said, "We have to put in a whole lot of money, \$2 billion worth"? We haven't put that money in. I remember Gerard Kennedy, mon ami Gerard, who used to say, "Not only have we given what Rozanski said; we have surpassed."

**Ms. Wynne:** Exactly.

**Mr. Marchese:** Somebody said, "Exactly." Was that you, Kathleen? She kills me. I'm telling you, she kills me. She stands up here and says, like Monsieur Kennedy, that they have not only met Rozanski, but surpassed Rozanski. And Kathleen's saying yes.

I've got to tell you that if Kathleen, the member from Don Valley West, is admitting that they have surpassed Rozanski, she is obviously in line for that cabinet seat, which means she'll say anything. I didn't think she would be capable of doing that. I didn't believe she could do that. Because, you see, when you've been there and you know, it's hard. It's hard to be oleaginous about it; it's really hard. It's hard to mask your feelings. I don't know how to do it. I just couldn't do it. I remember when my friend Mr. Cooke would do things that I didn't agree with. I hid from it, because I disagreed with some of the things. Rather than do what the member from Don Valley West was just saying, I let Dave Cooke go and defend himself as a minister, because in many cases we disagreed. I know you, Kathleen. You disagree with some of these policies.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Marchese:** Okay. I just want her to stand up and defend herself. That's why I'm saying this.

Look, boards are in trouble. Many boards are dipping into their reserves. This bill doesn't deal with any of that. You might say it's not intended to. But don't tell me it's about student performance, because it isn't. You are centralizing power provincially in a way that is offensive to what you stood for when you were in opposition. We have been waiting for you to introduce the standing



committee on education for three years now. It was a promise you made. The parliamentary assistant said in debate on second reading that we were going to have it. It's not in Bill 78, and you know what? It's not going to happen. I'm predicting to you, Parliamentary Assistant, that it's not going to happen. It's a prediction; I could be wrong. I could be.

We are waiting for that Liberal promise, as indeed we've been waiting for so many Liberal promises. But this one, a provincial standing committee on education, so we could have regular discussions and debates about what you're doing, so we could analyze you, so that you could defend your revolution and I could attack it—if you're so proud of your revolution, why haven't you had the nerve to set up the standing committee on education so we could have a healthy debate, so you could defend things as you want? Why not have the standing committee so we could talk about capital projects?

You'll remember the minister, Monsieur Kennedy, mon ami Monsieur Kennedy, who is no longer with us—he's moved on to more important things—announced two years ago that he was going to spend \$4 billion on capital projects. What it really means is they would spend, in terms of a mortgage—I don't know what it might be—\$280 million I think is the number that he had said. So if you put up \$280 million as paying for your mortgage, you then can leverage \$4 billion worth of capital projects. The first year, the minister claimed he was spending \$75 million—\$75 million. That was going to generate \$1 billion worth of capital projects. My assistant and I, just two weeks ago, saw some of the numbers that the member from Don Valley West may not have seen.

We thought they actually spent the \$75 million that the minister, mon ami Monsieur Kennedy, claimed was spent and all the Liberal members claim has been spent. The \$75 million, by the way, has not been spent. That would have represented 20%. Do you know what has been spent so far? It was 6%. We saw the figure, and we want to show it. We're putting it out in our newsletter, Kathleen, if you just want to check our website. We're putting it out so you can see, right? It's 6%, not 20%. The \$75 million is not \$75 million; it's a third of that or less. It's a quarter of that. So all these claims Liberals make about, "Oh, so much money we're spending to fix schools, more than any previous government in the history of this province," blah, blah, blah, are nothing. It's so, so pitiful.

2040

The Liberals are big on appearances. The Liberals are big on what they claim they're spending, like the capital budget: \$75 million—20%? Not even that. They had \$280 million to generate \$4 billion worth of capital projects, and many are in dire straits and need to be fixed; 120 to 130 of those schools need to be torn down and rebuilt. We don't have a clue how many they've built because they don't tell us. Kathleen told me, "Go around the province and check out the billboards." I said to Kathleen, I don't want to go around the province checking the billboards. I just don't have the time to do

that. Sorry. The province of Ontario is three times bigger than Italy, and I don't have the time to drive around. So I said to Kathleen, "Give me the numbers." You guys collect good numbers. Mon ami Gerard Kennedy said they have good statistical information at their disposal. Well, when you look for it, you can't get it. When you ask for it, they don't give it to you. Capital projects? Not 20%, \$75 million, but 6%. It's all you've done. It's pitiful. You ought to be ashamed of yourselves, all of you on the side of government, including those of you who are teachers and former trustees.

ESL: You know, so many trustees who were there and teachers know how important ESL is to students. We are robbing in the GTA, where so many of our immigrant kids end up; we have a reduced number of programs in ESL. Where the need is great, we have fewer ESL programs. I often show the People for Education chart, which shows a decline in programs that happened even under the revolutionary Liberals. Even under them, there's a decline of ESL programs. How can they justify that? The Liberals will stand up and say, "We're spending more." Fewer ESL programs.

Librarians: We're short of librarians. We so desperately need librarians because they're such a key part of education and student performance, yet we don't see the librarians in the school system. Liberals stand up and say, "We poured billions of dollars into the education system." Does anybody see it?

Physical education teachers—where are they? Where are the music teachers? "We're spending thousands, there are thousands and thousands of extra teachers in our education system." Where are they? I don't know. I just don't see them. I'm looking for that good statistical data that mon ami Gerard Kennedy said he had, and I just don't know where it is. I can't find it. Nobody is going to give it to me. I asked Kathleen, "Please, Kathleen, you're my friend. Give me some of that information. Share it with me." I asked for a special education report that presumably is out. I just got it last week. I asked the minister, "Can I have it?" "Oh no, it's not available. It's a draft. We're discussing," blah, blah, blah. I got the report that Kathleen co-authored. What's the big deal, hiding reports instead of sharing them?

I'm telling you, what that report speaks of is that there will be fewer students identified, more focus on the regular classroom. Yes, they will provide programs for kids, but it's going to be kids in the regular classroom. There are going to be fewer and fewer special education programs. We don't have the time to discuss that report, but I've got it—a report that's so secret. What are they hiding? What's Kathleen hiding? I don't get it. She could have given me a copy. Here it is. Now it's public. The Toronto Star person Mr. Urquhart got hold of that report. He didn't give me a copy; I had to get it on my own. What's the big deal? What are you hiding?

Special education is in trouble. The government says, "It's too expensive. We've got to cut down. How do we do it? Well, we're going to devise some system." Wait until you all see that report. It's an airy-fairy idea about



what we need to do. It's all so nice and idyllic. No money is going to be spent, but it sounds nice.

There are fewer ESL programs under the Liberals.

The transportation funding formula: We have been waiting for a new funding formula since 2005, the very formula that the minister said was a draft when I accused him of having redone the formula right there and then in 2005. He claimed it was a draft. He said that he was going to redo that draft with a new transportation policy. We're still waiting. Mon ami, M. Kennedy, n'est pas ici. Il s'en est allé. Now we've got another minister. We're not getting a new transportation funding formula; we're not going to get it.

We've got problems in the system. Peel Catholic had a \$15-million deficit. They said, "We can't cut programs." The government sent in an investigator. I want to tell you that on page 10 of this document, it still keeps a Conservative problem, which is personal liability of members of the board:

"(3) If a board that is subject to an order made under subsection 230.3(2) applies any of its funds otherwise than as the minister orders or authorizes, the members of the board who voted for the application are jointly and severally liable for the amount so applied, which may be recovered in a court of competent jurisdiction."

This is the same government that says, "We respect teachers; we respect trustees." But you don't respect them enough when you say, "If you don't spend as we say"—under the section on page 2 that I described earlier on, that talks about the provincial interest—"we'll make you personally liable. In fact, we'll even take you to court. We have so much love for you, boards and trustees, that we'll take you to court, just like the Tories did." In fact, they have so much love for the trustees that when the Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board said, "We've got a deficit of \$15 million and we're not going to cut the programs," they sent in an investigator, just like the Tories did. The Tories sent in three investi-

gators. As soon as the Peel Catholic board declared that there was a \$15-million deficit, they sent an investigator. But you love them; you love them differently than Tories: "When we send an investigator, we send them with love and we send them with care. We don't send them like the Tories did. Oh, no. They were evil. But when Liberals send them, we send them with love to try to fix the problem that the Catholic board has, because they need help to cut ESL. They need help to cut supply teachers. They need help to cut caretakers. No, no: We're doing it to help them because we're so different. We just love them." That's the Liberal revolution.

Bill 78, with the exception of three minor things, is so, so bad. I did my best in this one brief hour to articulate so many issues that need so, so much attention, but I wanted to focus on this Liberal magic, this peace-and-stability party. They hide under peace and stability and hope that the public will fall asleep and not look at these problems that the system is having for yet another year, to dream of another re-election where they'll come back and have

more peace and stability as board after board struggles to deal with their deficit. God bless you.

**The Acting Speaker:** Questions and comments?  
2050

**Mrs. Liz Sandals (Guelph-Wellington):** I'm delighted, actually, to tell you all that I have some good news here tonight. I think the member from Parry Sound-Muskoka will be particularly interested, along with my colleague from Nipissing, because we just got the news that the schools in the Near North District School Board are to reopen tomorrow, Tuesday. It's great news. If I could read you the release:

"The McGuinty government applauds the Near North District School Board and its occasional teachers for reaching a tentative agreement and reopening schools so that students and teachers can return to the classroom," Minister of Education Sandra Pupatello announced today. "Our government is on the side of Ontario families who want their children in the classroom learning," said Pupatello. "That's why we've been encouraging the board and teachers to get back to the table and are now congratulating them for reaching a tentative agreement and putting students first. With this tentative agreement across the province"—

**The Acting Speaker:** This is questions and comments on what the member said. You'll have an opportunity to speak next.

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker:** Go ahead, then. It's straying pretty far.

**Mrs. Sandals:** This is peace and stability. I'm just demonstrating that we have peace and stability. In fact, to precisely that point, all 31 contracts between public school boards and elementary occasional teachers have now been concluded. They will be four-year agreements running from September 1, 2004, to August 31, 2008, and will continue the tradition that we have built of peace and stability. Good news for our students, just as this bill that we are discussing tonight is good news for our students and for our teachers.

**Mr. O'Toole:** I respect the member for Trinity-Spadina. He always speaks with passion and enthusiasm, for sure. Just a breaking point there: It would be important to realize that he spoke briefly of David Cooke, the NDP Minister of Education who set about to change—revolutionize, if you will—education with the Royal Commission on Learning, and out of it was the genesis for the college of teachers. That's where it actually came from. So it's important to keep in mind the history of what this debate is about.

In fact, on May 8, Joe Atkinson as well as Margaret Wilson appeared at the hearings on Bill 78. Just for the record, I would like to commend their unsolicited input. This is what the former chair of the college of teachers said:

"I am here to express our concerns about changes proposed in Bill 78 that will adversely affect the college's ability to protect the public interest.



"Put simply, Bill 78 will pass control of the Ontario College of Teachers to the teacher unions.... However, the issue at hand is not one of teacher advocacy but of public interest. To change the law to give the teacher unions control of the professional body is flat-out wrong."

This is from the former head and a former teacher and a professional educator. He went on to say:

"Former education minister Gerard Kennedy said he wanted to revitalize the college and give control to working teachers. I'd like to put this myth of working teachers to bed. "The college council has 31 members. The government appoints 14. The other 17 elected members must all hold a teaching certificate. Some, such as those elected by principals and supervisory officers, are simply teachers with additional" responsibilities. "Teachers are already the majority...."

On Studio 2 he talked about the comment with respect to David Cooke, Sean Conway—

**The Acting Speaker:** Thank you. Further questions and comments?

**Ms. Horwath:** I too am pleased to make some comments on the fabulous speech by our critic, Rosario Marchese, the member from Trinity-Spadina, because he knows this file inside and out, he knows this bill inside and out. I would wager—well, okay, so I wouldn't wager; I'm not a gambling person. But I would suspect there are members in this very Legislature who have received a little bit of an education as to what this education bill is all about and I would suspect that some of the backbenchers were quite shocked to hear what their government, minister and parliamentary assistant might not be telling them about what is and isn't in this bill.

I think it was appropriate that the member from Trinity-Spadina took about 10 minutes at the beginning of his speech to indicate that there are a few things—a very few, but a few things—that New Democrats can live with. But then he went on quite strongly to indicate the parts of the bill that are simply odious from the perspective of New Democrats.

He talked about, at the very beginning of the bill, the issue of the collection of personal information and really how frightening that is when you consider that there are no real parameters being put around this new power, this new need to get personal information collected on students. He talked about his initiative to try to get the Ombudsman having some oversight of the education system.

He talked about the issue of provincial interest. Interestingly enough, the current and previous ministers talked about flexibility and used all this wonderful language: getting rid of the one size fits all. The member for Trinity-Spadina quite accurately indicated how this very piece called "provincial interest" does exactly the opposite and in fact prescribes things that the boards need to do, outcomes that are supposed to be achieved. I could go on about the special-ed issues that were raised, the college of teacher issues that were raised, the public

interest committee—needless to say, there is a heck of a lot that New Democrats are concerned about.

**Ms. Wynne:** I want to respond to three things that the member for Trinity-Spadina talked about.

Section 4 puts in place a process whereby the ministry and boards will discuss and determine the nature of guidelines on a range of policy issues, not just finances. The member for Trinity-Spadina says, "What good is consulting?" In 1986, when I was a young mom—and I believe the member for Trinity-Spadina was on the Toronto school board at that time—I would have loved for there to have been guidelines that came from the ministry, that had been developed in conjunction with school boards, around a range of issues—around parent involvement, around staffing, around class size—all of those things that we're talking about, there being a discussion and a consultation between the board and the ministry. That would have been a very good thing. I'm surprised that the member for Trinity-Spadina wouldn't support it.

On special education, the sole aim of this government is to make sure that students with special needs get the programs they need and get them in the way they need them. There is \$1.8 billion being spent on special education right now. That is the whole amount. There's approximately \$50 million more being spent this year just on the high-needs students. What we heard repeatedly before we were elected and since we've been elected is that the identification process was onerous, was burdensome and took the focus off the delivery of program and put it on administrative identification processes. That is what we must change if kids are going to get the programs they need. So I look forward to the member's comments once we know exactly how we're going to move forward there.

The final thing is the public interest committee. I want to just say that I believe that the establishment of the public interest committee is a direct result of the diminution of the role of teachers that was perpetrated by the previous government. We are now in a position where we're having to make it crystal clear to anyone who bought the Tory line about teachers that the public interest is being served, and that's what the public interest committee is about.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Trinity-Spadina has two minutes.

**Mr. Marchese:** First of all, on the regulation regarding the provincial interest, I'll read to the member from Don Valley West. Here's what it says: "The Lieutenant Governor in Council may make regulations prescribing, respecting and governing the duties of boards, so as to further and promote the provincial interest...." It doesn't talk about guidelines; it talks about "prescribing, respecting and governing the duties of boards." When they consult with boards, once they've decided what you do, it's too late, is my argument.

On special ed, when the Tories introduced that measure to have students identified for special education needs, trustees said, "Don't take it away now." I remem-



ber trustees in Oshawa telling me, "We've done the hard work, but now that we've done the hard work, don't take it away. How else are we going to identify students with special needs?" So I'm looking forward to seeing what this member, with her minister, is going to propose by way of special ed. But I've got to tell you, I'm not too confident about what Kathleen Wynne and the minister want to do. I just don't see it. I don't know how they're going to identify students who have special education needs and need the care. Forty thousand students are not getting attention—just like under the Tories. But Gerard Kennedy wouldn't have it when he was in opposition. Now that they're Liberals, "We love special education kids. We just don't mind having them wait, because we're better than the Tories."

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On the issue of the special interest committee, I disagreed with Mr. Cooke. He's a capable man. I disagreed with him strongly, as I disagreed with the Tories and as I disagree with Kathleen Wynne, who made a statement in defence of why they're doing it which is incomprehensible—it doesn't make any sense. What she said absolutely doesn't make any sense. That provincial interest committee has got to go, and I hope the people of Ontario know this.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr. Oraziotti:** It's a pleasure to rise this evening in the Legislature to add some comments on Bill 78, the Education Statute Law Amendment Act, otherwise known as the student performance bill, in what seems to be a fairly lively discussion over a few key issues in the bill, in particular the college of teachers and some of the other responsibilities that we're raising in the legislation.

I want to say first and foremost that as a former teacher I'm very pleased with the progress we have made in less than three years in restoring peace and stability to education in Ontario. I think you just have to get out there and talk to the parents, the students and the teachers to find out very quickly what a breath of fresh air the last couple of years have been in restoring much of the peace and stability in the classroom. I would be happy, as time moves on toward the election, to put our record of education up against the NDP or Conservative records at any time. I recall, when I was a teacher starting in 1993, the social contract, and I don't recall a lot of consultation when 140,000 teachers' contracts were ripped up without any consultation. Certainly over the last eight years of the Conservative rule with respect to education, there wasn't a lot of consultation either. Rozanski's report clearly indicated that billions of dollars needed to be invested in education that weren't. I think unrest was something that was typical in the Harris-Eves government and part of their legacy in education, when you have an education minister who set out to create a crisis in education and certainly did that. About 400 public schools closed under the Conservative government and 200 private schools began. I think it sends a very clear message on where the Conservatives stand when it comes to publicly funded education in the province of Ontario.

With that, I want to focus on four main features of Bill 78: teaching excellence, new responsibilities for boards and the ministry, the Ontario College of Teachers, and openness to the public.

There is a wide range of factors that influence the effectiveness of teaching. Increasing student performance means supporting leadership in the school, the availability of resources, the quality of curriculum and strategies being used by the school and the system. It also means providing the support and recognition for what teachers and educators do on behalf of students each and every day. We recognize the need to strengthen the skills and abilities of teachers as well as improve these other factors which are vital to ensuring overall teacher excellence and increasing student success. So we are replacing the pen-and-paper test with mentors and classroom experience. The old qualifying test, the Ontario teacher qualifying test, was criticized in terms of its relevance and the fact that it did not actually evaluate classroom experience, a very common complaint among those in the education sector, that the measurement used was not really reflective of the responsibilities and duties that were required to perform well in the classroom and in terms of educating students.

Subject to the approval of the Legislature, the requirement for teacher candidates to pass the OTQT as a condition of certification would be revoked. In its place, teachers would be required to complete the new teacher induction program, the NTIP, that supports their orientation, mentoring and professional development, which is already under way in many schools across Ontario. The new teacher induction program is designed as a positive second step for new teachers, giving them valuable in-class support during their challenging first year of practice. It would complement their formal one year of pre-service training with another full year of support, and the result would obviously be better prepared, more confident teachers who are better trained in the classroom.

If approved, the program would replace the qualifying test with more meaningful assessment of actual teaching practice focusing on teacher success through feedback and performance and growth. It would also provide a variety of supports for new teachers, including professional development and training in areas such as classroom management, communication with parents and other activities aligned with the current ministry initiatives. It would also include mentoring for new teachers by experienced teachers and orientation of all new teachers by the school and school board.

If approved, successful completion of the new teacher induction program would be required. Two satisfactory ratings on their performance appraisals would also be required and noted on the teacher's certificate and on the Ontario College of Teachers public register. This is accountability. This is a way to support teacher training, and it is certainly in the public interest.

Under the framework of teacher excellence, professional development days are also important. We know that teacher professional activity days or development



days were reduced significantly. They're designated during the school year, when teachers engage in a variety of activities such as student assessment, curriculum development, meetings with parents and overall teacher professional development. In recent years, some of the PA days have also been used to supplement preparation time for elementary teachers, as part of their local collective agreements. That is something we want to move back into the proper time allocation so it's not part of collective agreement processes.

In 1997, the previous government reduced the number of PA days from nine to four, just as they were introducing entirely new curriculum. In other provinces the average is nine. Four days out of 194 in the school year does not allow principals and teachers enough opportunity to engage in shared problem-solving, team learning and the latest teaching techniques. These teaching techniques are critical for teachers to assist the government in implementing key student success initiatives such as improved student achievement in literacy and numeracy, and to reduce the secondary school drop-out rate.

We've made a commitment to add two full days that would be designated for teachers' professional development and, if the Legislature approves the proposed amendment, we would intend to amend the regulation to provide for an increased number of professional activity days for the provincial initiatives that are needed. The total would obviously be six, and we would be undoing some of the damage under the past government, giving that opportunity back to teachers.

Also, adding the two days within the school year would not involve additional costs to the school boards or the ministry. There would be no additional salary costs, since they're already covered, and there would be no additional cost for supply teachers.

With respect to new responsibilities for boards and the ministry, the bill contains measures that would support the government's ability to build confidence in public education. To support the government's ability to ensure confidence in public education, the ministry has identified key areas of provincial interest such as class size, fiscal responsibility and improvements in literacy and numeracy, as well as safe schools. The bill would permit regulations to clarify ministry and board responsibility related to those goals particularly concerning student performance. It would enable the ministry to set provincial outcomes and require the boards to meet these outcomes. That's accountability. That's what this bill does to improve the relationship with accounting when it comes to the public interest and when it comes to the responsibility of school boards across the province.

Unlike the Conservatives, our government has a solid record of advancing its goals through consultation and co-operation, and we're committed to continuing this approach. We acknowledge and respect the valuable role of school boards in our publicly funded education system and are committed to working together to achieve excellence in education for all students. That co-operative

working relationship is only enhanced by a clear understanding of the responsibilities and expectations of the ministry and school boards. The government understands that the delivery of education programs and services is through a partnership of both government and boards. We understand the importance of consultation and having buy-in regarding any standards that might be established. We're not interested, as the past government was, in taking over school boards in Ontario and usurping the elected authority of trustees who are committed to acting in the public interest to ensure the best education for students. We want to work with our school boards. In addition, previously established punitive measures that personally penalized trustees who failed to comply with directions, orders or decisions of the minister would be repealed.

To further ensure public confidence in education, the government intends to establish a standing committee on education to hold public hearings every year on the effectiveness of provincial funding.

In addition, as we know, technology is becoming an ever-increasing factor in education and certainly in reaching remote and more isolated parts of the province. This proposed legislation would also give school boards the authority to provide instruction by electronic means to students who aren't able to be in a classroom setting.

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As we know, the Education Amendment Act of 2005 repealed previous legislation and provided for negotiation of two- or four-year collective agreements. We've also announced measures to encourage longer-term contracts, including salary increases, investments to support student success and provincial dialogue on workload issues. If the bill is passed, obviously we would allow the extension of labour agreements from two- to four-year terms.

**Class size:** If passed, the bill would repeal sections of the Education Act relating to class size limits and replace it with the authority to make regulations governing class size that support phased implementation of our commitment to reduce primary class sizes in the primary grades. All of the research, as we know, indicates that the earlier we can provide supports to the youngest Ontarians, the better chance they will have of success in the education system.

With respect to the college of teachers, which has been raised several times this evening, there are some notable changes in the bill that will improve the relationship of the college to the parent community as well as to the teaching community across the province. We believe it's time to revitalize and depoliticize the Ontario College of Teachers and make it truly a self-regulatory professional body. Teachers are professionals who deserve the privilege of self-regulation. The benefits of a successful college in Ontario should be obvious to those in the province. If passed, the legislation would change the governance structure of the college to depoliticize it and have a majority of classroom teachers on its council. These changes would support the government's excellence-for-



all commitment to a college comprised mostly of working classroom teachers, just like the college of nurses and the college of social workers, which are mostly comprised of working members in those professions.

I was told earlier that at the standing committee on social policy there was a report back on about 60 colleges and regulatory bodies such as the dentists, the law association, the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario, pharmacists and the like. The question was asked, which body has the lowest percentage of working professionals as its members? It would still be the Ontario College of Teachers; even under the new model, the 51% would be the lowest of those reported bodies. Certainly, allegations and suggestions that the teachers' unions are going to be taking over the college couldn't be further from the truth. These are working teachers who are not permitted to be part of the union leadership in any way, sitting on the Ontario College of Teachers and acting in the interest of families, students, and teachers as well.

The member from Trinity-Spadina pointed out a number of things in the bill. One of the things that he did say, and I give him credit for recognizing it, is that teachers are very concerned about the integrity of the profession, the relationship that they have in the community, and would not want to see that damaged in any way. I think it goes without saying that any profession in the province of Ontario is disappointed and disgusted, and their morale shaken, when individuals in their own profession engage in activities that are unbecoming of individuals in that particular organization. I think very strongly that teachers in Ontario who are respected professionals are going to act in the interest of families of this province and will do the right thing when it comes to decision-making on issues of integrity or performance.

If passed, the legislation would change the governance structure of the college of teachers, as we know, to depoliticize it, and we would have a majority of classroom teachers on the council. Under the previous Conservative government, the college of teachers was unduly politicized, and it had negative results. In the last college election, a mere 4% of teachers bothered to cast a vote, a second consecutive decline in voter turnout, indicating a profound loss of confidence by teachers themselves in the college. That's not the kind of involvement and morale building that we want to see in the college. Four per cent of teachers participating I think sends a very clear message that there's something wrong with the college, and it needs to be addressed. That's what we're doing.

In return for having the privilege and responsibility of self-regulation, we will be strengthening the college's duty to serve the public interest. Subject to the approval of Bill 78 by the Legislature, representatives of specific union organizations would be precluded from assuming office on council. Our reforms will also ensure that teacher representatives on the council are working classroom teachers. The best way to serve and protect the public interest is to have the people who are actually

teaching our students make the decisions, not the people who are on leave to other organizations or other workplaces. We want teachers who are in the closest contact with our students every day to tell us what they need to improve conditions for teachers to develop into as highly qualified, motivated professionals as possible.

Bill 78 also creates a public interest committee comprised of three to five members who will be appointed by the minister. The committee will advise the council with respect to its duty to protect the public interest, so there is a component of public interest worked into the new formula and the new framework of the college of teachers.

The maximum number of years that a council member could serve on council would be reduced from 10 to seven consecutive years. This would increase turnover on the council and bring in new and different ideas and different perspectives from different individuals who would serve on the new council or college. An open, fair and transparent election process that would increase voter participation and encourage teachers to play an active part in the governance and regulation of their profession would also be included as part of the new framework. These measures are among the strongest conflict-of-interest provisions of any professional college in the province of Ontario, and none of these provisions existed under either of the two previous governments.

Our government is on the side of teachers and students. Our purpose has always been to restore respect and public confidence in the education system. Restoring respect and public confidence means that we have to make some of these changes to the system, changes which I think many people would agree are long overdue.

Finally, the college's obligation to establish fair and transparent standards, practices and procedures for the college's registration process for all applicants, including internationally trained teachers, would be statutorily affirmed; in other words, in legislation.

In addition, empowering student trustees is a first step in the ongoing student trustee development. The legislation, if passed in its present form, would provide student trustees with a variety of rights, including a scholarship at the completion of their term, equal access to all board resources and the same right to attend trustee training opportunities as other board members. This supports the minister's commitment to address the Ontario Student Trustees' Association recommendations to empower student representatives on the school boards.

We will also be making a new proposal in the future for discussion on student engagement, touching on character education and citizenship values, the ability for students to influence their school environment, and new models for student trustees to review as well.

One of the other issues that has been on the front burner, so to speak, in the education sector has been trustee remuneration and the role that trustees play in the province of Ontario, working hard to safeguard student interests and the interests of families. The hard work and contribution of trustees towards increased student success has resulted in a productive environment of peace and



stability and school programs through improved student achievement and improved services. Trustees' capacity to undertake their role is an important ingredient in the successful improvement of the education system.

If passed in its present form, Bill 78 would permit school boards to set trustee compensation up to provincial limits that would be set in regulation, in line with school boards elsewhere in Canada. It would allow them to grant authority for regulations to provide a retroactive increase to trustees' honoraria for the current school year and permit the government to require a process to assist boards to set compensation. It would also eliminate arbitrary and paternalistic penalties to which trustees are exposed, which were enacted by the previous government. We would also provide greater clarification about their respective roles in stewarding education.

**Public reporting:** The legislation also, if passed, would give the ministry the ability to require school boards to publish reports respecting their compliance with specific operational requirements that will be set out in regulation, fostering greater public accountability and openness in education. In response to concerns around privacy regulation, the collection of student information, after closely working with the ministry and the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner, a motion was passed at committee to ensure that the bill conforms with the federal and provincial privacy legislation. The Information and Privacy Commissioner has no objection to the legislation in its current form.

What I would like to conclude with is that Bill 78 definitely does relate to student performance. Numerous aspects that I've highlighted do just that. I think it's misleading for opposition members to suggest this has nothing to do with student performance when the focus of our government for the past nearly three years has been to improve student performance and create greater peace and stability in the education system. Bill 78 has numerous components that do this and I encourage members to support the bill.

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**The Acting Speaker:** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Jackson:** I want to commend the member for Sault Ste. Marie for his comments. As a former teacher, being a member of the teachers' federation, he obviously brings a great deal of personal experience to the debate. I too bring some experience to this debate, having been a school trustee for 10 years. I got elected when I was 24, so I suspect I felt like a student trustee at some times during the course of some board meetings.

I personally am not as exercised as most in this House about the province taking on additional oversight responsibilities with school boards. I've had some very bad experiences with the Halton Board of Education in terms of complying with the legislation of the day. Our school board blatantly refused, in light of the legislation, to allow for the Learning Disabilities Association of Halton's nominee to sit on its special education advisory committee. I recall taking this to Minister Kennedy, who I found was quite good at responding to things when they

weren't confronting him on the floor of the Legislature. I went to Gerard and said, "This is the law of the land. This is right in the act," and he wrote me a personal note saying, "Yes, the school board should be compliant," but nothing was really done.

So that section of this legislation, although some are arguing against it—I sat on that side of the House when we attempted to do certain things that would force school boards to be compliant with the law. If, in fact, that is the purpose of that section, I will be pleased to support it.

I also support the notions around prescribing specific guidelines. The Halton school board, for example, got involved with this policy governance. This thing got so badly out of whack that when the school board closed down schools, the trustees said, "We didn't even make the decision. It was our administrators. Trustees never had a hand in it." I look forward to debating this bill in further detail when it's before the House again.

**Ms. Horwath:** I too want to make some comments on the remarks by the member from Sault Ste. Marie. His speech, if I recall, began with a bit of a review or report card about some of his concerns about what other governments did. That's not really helpful, because what we're here to do is talk about Bill 78 and what this government is doing. I have to say that in that regard the member made some remarks around the idea that student—

*Interjections.*

**Ms. Horwath:** Mr. Speaker?

**The Acting Speaker:** Order. It's getting late.

**Ms. Horwath:** —that student success initiatives around literacy and numeracy were something they could be proud of. But I know our critic has been quite concerned about the manipulation of the function of the testing, as something that has been of concern. The member is pretty much taking credit for things that really are not a credit to anything that has happened in regard to dealing with improving the way students learn and those results therefore getting better, with improving the school system and therefore the test results getting better, but rather with knowing that the tests have been changed so that students can achieve better on them.

I'm not saying one way or the other, this or that. I'm just saying that you can't take credit for something you really had no hand in. Yes, the students may be getting better scores, but that's really just a function of the changing of the test to make it a six-hour instead of a 12-hour test, to make it more multiple-choice oriented and to make the ability of students to achieve better because they could use a calculator in more parts of the test, including the multiple choice.

There's a number of other issues, particularly issues around whether or not this government is really achieving what it said it was going to achieve, particularly on special education and ESL—still failing miserably there.

**Mrs. Maria Van Bommel (Lambton-Kent-Middlesex):** I'm certainly glad to be able to comment on the debate that the member from Sault Ste. Marie has put



forward. I want to just touch specifically on two of the things he talked about.

One of them was the matter of the bill giving school boards the authority to provide instruction by electronic means to students who aren't present in the classroom. I think that also extends to students who don't have access to all programs that they may want for themselves. In rural and northern Ontario, where we see declining numbers in our schools, we hear very often from school boards that are worried about being able to provide programs to those students who require certain programming. E-learning is something that I look forward to in my riding. I think it's going to offer a lot of options to students without forcing them to leave their communities or forcing the boards to even consider closing schools.

Another thing I want to talk about is the student trustee. I had an opportunity to attend a local school board meeting with the Thames Valley District School Board, and during the evening the discussion of the student trustee came up. I was surprised to learn that the student trustee didn't have access to the same resources that other trustees did. I assumed that they always did. I know that compensation was an issue, and I know they're happy to be getting the scholarship as compensation, but I was surprised to find out that the student trustees in Thames Valley didn't automatically get to attend conferences and learning opportunities that the other trustees did. I think it's about time they were treated the same as trustees. They certainly take on the same responsibilities and have the same workload. So I think this bill will offer them the compensation they deserve.

**Mr. O'Toole:** I'm pleased to respond to the member from Sault Ste. Marie. He did mention a couple of things. There's no bill that doesn't have some noteworthy attempts to make the system better, regardless of who is government. One example that we'd agree on, certainly, is the student trustee.

Once again, it's always important to look to history. There's a report here that I had asked for from Larry Johnston, who's a research officer on the standing committee. The report was issued May 9. In it, he talked about the Royal Commission on Learning and the important work done by David Cooke, and subsequently by our government, that instituted the school trustee initiative. So you're right to take that to the next logical step. The member from Sault Ste. Marie may not know that this was instituted when we were in government.

One of the more objective reports on this thing was Ian Urquhart's article in the Toronto Star. In that article, it says "Alarm Sounded Over Teachers' Regulatory Body." That's on May 8. I thought that article was quite good. There's actually another article by Ian Urquhart

and others—I think I would also mention this article: "Province Probes Board: Dufferin-Peel reporting \$15-million deficit." Mr. Kennedy, the minister then, sent in an audit team. This report found that there were no irregularities. But this is a pretty true accounting that there's every attempt by the McGuinty government to buy peace at any price.

The evidence that will be coming down the line here is that most boards, not just Peel boards, are now in operating deficits. There are problems in special education—not just autism—there's trouble in busing, there's trouble in northern schools. This government is in trouble on the very agenda that they think they own: education.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member from Sault Ste. Marie has two minutes in which to respond.

**Mr. Oraziotti:** I'm pleased to hear the comments from numerous members here this evening who have responded to the comments I made earlier with respect to Bill 78, the Education Statute Law Amendment Act, also known as the student performance bill. There are numerous aspects of this piece of legislation that I think as a government we can all support.

There are some very positive changes that need to be made that have been long awaited in the education sector when it comes to ensuring that our new teachers are supported and have the resources they need. The old pen-and-paper test—after countless tests and countless exams, after years of university, after additional professional training at a teachers' college program in the province or elsewhere, once they reach that point, it's time to ensure that the resources are there for the teachers in the classroom to do the job that they need done. This is a significant change, the new teacher induction program, where they will have mentored support for the first year. They will need to pass their performance appraisals on two counts to ensure that they have completed that successfully.

As well, there are the new responsibilities for boards and the ministry to ensure that the board is meeting all of those requirements and regulations in the new piece of legislation, and being accountable to the public for the changes that they're required to implement. That aspect of the legislation is incredibly important. Additional aspects of the legislation include the four-year collective agreement, historic agreements that were reached in Ontario, giving us peace and stability in education that we have not seen for many years.

I encourage members to support Bill 78.

**The Acting Speaker:** The time now being 9:30 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until 1:30 tomorrow.

*The House adjourned at 2131.*





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No. 81



N° 81

ISSN 1180-2987

## Legislative Assembly of Ontario

Second Session, 38<sup>th</sup> Parliament

## Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Deuxième session, 38<sup>e</sup> législature

# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

# Journal des débats (Hansard)

Tuesday 30 May 2006

Mardi 30 mai 2006



Speaker  
Honourable Michael A. Brown

Président  
L'honorable Michael A. Brown

Clerk  
Claude L. DesRosiers

Greffier  
Claude L. DesRosiers



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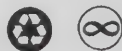
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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 30 May 2006

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 30 mai 2006

*The House met at 1330.  
Prayers.*

### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

#### UNITED WAY

**Mrs. Julia Munro (York North):** Yesterday I was pleased to attend the 24th annual building industry luncheon, generously supported by Metrus Development Inc.

This event raised more than \$420,000 for the United Way of York region. In its history, these luncheons have raised more than \$3 million for service programs in York region. Congratulations to Fred De Gasperis and all the organizers of the event for the contribution to our quality of life in York region. I would also like to thank the United Way campaign cabinet led by David Barnes of Amex Canada; Rahul Bhardwaj, CEO of the United Way; and all of the staff, volunteers and donors of the York region United Way.

The money they raised benefits over 100 critical programs, funding 37 agencies throughout York region. Thousands of York region residents benefit from this assistance. To quote David Barnes, the campaign chair, "Quality of life doesn't just happen. We all have to make a concerted effort to do our part. Every act of kindness, every act of generosity created a powerful force for positive change."

Congratulations to all those who made yesterday such a great day.

#### KYOTO PROTOCOL

**Mr. Peter Tabuns (Toronto–Danforth):** In the wake of Stephen Harper making it clear he is going to scuttle any real action on Kyoto and climate change, Quebec and Manitoba, Ontario's neighbours, have made it clear they are going to go forward with their commitment to meet Kyoto targets; from Dalton McGuinty, though, simply silence.

Silence is a losing policy. Ontario will be hit hard by climate change. For example, climate change will decrease levels in our lakes, in our Great Lakes, reducing the amount of fresh water that's available, reducing our ability to make hydroelectricity. Higher temperatures will accelerate the chemical processes in our atmosphere that cause smog, so even if we are able to cut the amount of

pollution we put into the air, we will see more smog days.

It's critical that Ontario go forward, setting its own climate plan, setting real commitments, setting the resources aside and moving forward to take action on climate change. Given that the province has jurisdiction over many areas that the federal government doesn't have—for instance, setting building codes, and the fact that the province runs the electrical system and can afford to and would benefit from investing in efficiency and conservation—Ontario can do a lot.

We need action in this province. Ontario will be hurt by climate change. Ontarians will pay more for food. They will face more violent weather conditions and watch as huge volumes of our northern forests go up in smoke. We can't stand idly by while Stephen Harper drops the ball on Kyoto. Ontario has to quickly set its own plan to meet the Kyoto targets, it has to appropriate the resources to meet those plans, it has to proceed, and it has to start this year.

#### WALK FOR HUMAN VALUES

**Mr. Bas Balkissoon (Scarborough–Rouge River):** On Sunday, May 28, the fourth annual Walk for Human Values organized by the Sathya Sai School of Toronto took place in the Malvern community of my riding of Scarborough–Rouge River. Minister Harinder Takhar and myself joined over 3,000 participants from across the GTA to walk in the name of peace, non-violence, truth and love.

One participant in the crowd, Ms. Megan Bennet, travelled all the way from Foothill Ranch, California, with the goal of implementing a similar walk in her community in 2007.

This walk has now become a trailblazer for cities across Canada, 12 of which held their own Walk for Values on the same day. The cities of Edmonton, Regina and Saskatoon proclaimed May 28 as Human Values Day in their cities.

This walk was not about raising funds or provoked by anger; instead, it was focused on character-building and encouraging role models in the community. Walking together as kindred spirits, participants raised awareness of the need to practise the values of tolerance, understanding and respect, values that are gradually being eroded by negative forces. The walkers conveyed their messages of human values through songs and decorated floats. The participants' demonstrations of understanding,



peace and commitment to positive change show us all the importance of recognizing our values.

I would like to congratulate the Sathya Sai School of Toronto in their efforts in making a difference in our community, our province and in Canada through their Walk for Human Values.

#### RIDE FOR DAD

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North):** On Saturday, May 27, I was pleased to take part in the opening ceremonies and parade for the second annual Huronia Ride for Dad. Colin Wackett of the local prostate cancer awareness group drove me in the parade in a 2006 Mustang convertible supplied by Thor Motors of Orillia. Five hundred thirty-six motorcycles left the OPP general headquarters and toured around North Simcoe throughout the afternoon.

Ride for Dad raises funds for prostate cancer research and public education. All of the funds remain in the local area. This year there are eight cities in Ontario hosting the Ride for Dad. All rides are sponsored by the local police associations. In Huronia, the Ontario Provincial Police Association and the Barrie Police Association took part in this wonderful event. Motorcycles from the Blue Knights, Southern Cruisers and several other clubs raised \$66,340 in pledges. Along with corporate donations, the Huronia Ride for Dad's grand total should top around the \$100,000 mark.

My sincere thanks to OPP Commissioner Gwen Boniface for allowing the general headquarters to be used as the home base for the Huronia Ride for Dad, and a sincere thanks to all the volunteers and participants who have made Ride for Dad a resounding success, both financially and in prostate cancer awareness.

1340

#### PINE GROVE PUBLIC SCHOOL

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn (Oakville):** It gives me great pride to rise in the House today to recognize and congratulate Oakville's Pine Grove Public School, which recently celebrated its 50th anniversary. Pine Grove has 785 students enrolled in a French immersion program. Pine Grove is a centre of educational excellence, instructing in both of Canada's official languages.

To celebrate the anniversary this year, parents and staff came together with three purposes: to create a memorable experience for the students; to develop activities to enhance the community spirit and bond between students, parents and their school; to support the greater community by helping Halton's Transitions for Youth, a local organization that helps children at risk.

Pine Grove students and their families, staff and the wider community attempted to break the Guinness world record for the most jugglers juggling three objects for 10 seconds. Over 1,500 people came together at Oakville Place and broke the North American record.

I was pleased to be there to see so many celebrating Pine Grove and raising funds and awareness for Transitions for Youth in Halton. It was a fun event and showcased the innovative community spirit of the school and the students.

Pine Grove is a wonderful school. It's an example of excellence in public education in Ontario. It proves that if you invest in our young people, you get schools like Pine Grove.

#### BORDER SECURITY

**Mr. Ted Arnott (Waterloo-Wellington):** This afternoon, members of the House will likely have a chance to give unanimous support for a motion aimed at helping to resolve the Canada-US passport issue. This is a rare opportunity that will enable us to speak with one voice before the Premier of Ontario attends the Western Premiers' Conference in Gimli, Manitoba, in the coming days.

Success is critical, because without decisive action soon, travellers crossing the Canada-US border will be required to carry a passport or its equivalent, to be phased in starting in just seven months. If the motion this afternoon passes, the views of MPPs and the best interests of our tourism and hospitality sector will be represented at the conference. I want to thank the leader of the official opposition for travelling to Washington last Wednesday, where he had 10 meetings in just one day, for bringing forward this motion and for taking constructive steps to show leadership on this issue.

Last week, our party's leader communicated directly with the Premier and the leader of the third party in a way that effectively demonstrates the scope of the passport issue and the enormity of the potential negative impacts on the economies on both sides of the border. All members surely understand that passing the motion will arm the Premier with our full support and demonstrate the depth and breadth of our understanding. It's a gesture that shows we care about tourism, about people visiting our province and about jobs.

I hope that we, as legislators, will put aside any partisan considerations, allow this discussion to take place and send a strong signal that we are working together across Canada to resolve this issue.

#### RURAL ONTARIO

**Mr. John Wilkinson (Perth-Middlesex):** Hallelujah that there is light on all sides of the House on that issue about the border. Glad to have you on side.

In our increasingly urban-suburban province, care must be taken to ensure that our rural way of life is cherished. Everything comes from the land and returns to the land. That's why I was pleased to attend on Saturday, May 27, the grand opening of the McCully Centre for Rural Learning outside St. Marys in my riding.

Two wonderful Ontario Trillium Foundation announcements were made. First, the Thames Talbot Land

Trust received \$56,500 over 24 months to build their capacity. The land trust allows people, especially rural farmers and landowners, to donate their land to this charity to preserve it for future generations. I also formally announced \$85,300 over 15 months to the McCully Centre for Rural Learning so they can implement their amazing business plan.

The family farm is an integral part of Ontario's rural way of life. Just as important is educating people, especially young people, on the benefits of agriculture to all Ontarians.

With Saturday's funding, the McCully centre will further work to increase the sustainability of rural Ontario by providing a learning environment where all age groups can learn about and experience the relationship between food, farms, the environment and rural communities in the context of a working family farm. This follows and builds on a family tradition that dates back to the 1920s, when Norm McCully, now in the Ontario Agricultural Hall of Fame for his educational activities, began courses at the farm and went on to engage and host various rural youth groups.

I commend the centre and the board of directors for their very hard work.

#### HEATHER CROWE AWARD

**Mr. Phil McNeely (Ottawa–Orléans):** I rise in the House today to congratulate the five worthy recipients of the Heather Crowe Award from my riding of Ottawa–Orléans. The recipients were honoured in an awards ceremony in Orléans this past Wednesday. Minister Watson joined us for this occasion and shared in the tribute to the late Heather Crowe.

Heather Crowe, as we all know, suffered from inoperable lung cancer caused by 40 years of exposure to second-hand smoke in her workplace. She lost the battle with her illness and passed away last Monday, just over a week before she would see this province become completely smoke-free in all enclosed areas.

Mrs. Crowe's message will live on. She fought to educate and spread awareness to others who work in the service industry, teaching the harmful effects of second-hand smoke.

The Heather Crowe Award was created to recognize other Ontarians who have joined in her campaign. In my riding we recognized four individuals and one group that have committed themselves to the realization of a smoke-free Ontario. We awarded this distinction award to Catherine Laska, who led the exposé smoke-free youth program for l'École secondaire catholique Béatrice-Desloges; Ken Kyle, the director of public issues for the Canadian Cancer Society; Camille Juzwik, who organized a postcard campaign to gauge support within her school community for a smoke-free Ontario; Dierdre Freiheit, a member of the Canadian Lung Association; and Roberte Vincent, Karen Chalmers and Holly Massie, a group of teachers from Sir Wilfrid Laurier Secondary School who were directly involved in the city of Ottawa's exposé project.

I'd like to congratulate each of these recipients of the Heather Crowe Award. It is through their efforts that the smoke-free Ontario legislation will become a reality within 12 hours.

#### SMOKE-FREE ONTARIO

**Mr. David Orazietti (Sault Ste. Marie):** I rise in the House today to recognize the significant step our government is taking in protecting the health of the residents of my riding of Sault Ste. Marie as well as the health of all Ontarians through the Smoke-Free Ontario Act, which will come into effect this Thursday.

Tobacco use is the number one preventable cause of disease in Ontario, and our government is committed to reducing its consumption by 20% from 2003 levels. Our legislation will help us meet this target by protecting people from second-hand smoke, preventing more young people from picking up the deadly habit and helping smokers to quit.

People in my community will be breathing a little easier on June 1, when smoking is prohibited in all restaurants, bars and workplaces, so that non-smoking individuals, like the courageous Heather Crowe, will not have to suffer needlessly because of someone else's choice.

The Smoke-Free Ontario Act also hinders the ability of children to start smoking in the first place. Tougher penalties will be assessed on both those who sell cigarettes to minors and those who purchase cigarettes for them. It will be illegal for stores to put cigarettes in colourful behind-the-counter display cases. Our government is funding 100% of the cost to enforce this legislation through Ontario's 36 public health units, which recently received \$5.5 million, bringing the total annual investment to \$60 million, a six-fold increase since our government took office. Locally in Sault Ste. Marie, it has meant an additional \$500,000 for the public health unit.

I think all members of this Legislature realize that second-hand smoke and tobacco addiction pose serious health problems, and this legislation and the investment for a smoke-free Ontario will help reduce tobacco consumption, something we can all be proud of.

#### LEGISLATIVE PAGES

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** I beg the indulgence of the House to allow the pages to assemble for their introduction.

From Nipissing we have Amanda Barrios; from Scarborough East we have Meagan Blandizzi; from Oxford, Gregory Borris; from Ottawa–Vanier, Juliet Caragianis; from York North, Evan Dailey; from Haldimand–Norfolk–Brant, Madeleine Ghesquiere; from Kitchener Centre, Luke Johnson; from Brampton West–Mississauga, Harjot Kaur; from Kingston and the Islands, Meghan Kerr; from Nickel Belt, Tyler Lalonde; from Kitchener–Waterloo, Anni Li; from Durham, Katie



McRae; from Whitby–Ajax, Tommy Meikle; from Erie–Lincoln, Mitchell Minor; from Beaches–East York, Shazia Moledina; from Parkdale–High Park, Daniel Mount; from Barrie–Simcoe–Bradford, Hartford Murdoch; from Halton, Clarence Pong; from Bramalea–Gore–Malton–Springdale, Pardeep Sanghera; and from Cambridge, Nolan Wilson.

Assist me in welcoming our pages.

*Applause.*

1350

## REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

### STANDING COMMITTEE ON GENERAL GOVERNMENT

**Mr. Jim Brownell (Stormont–Dundas–Charlottenburgh):** I beg leave to present a report from the standing committee on general government and move its adoption.

**The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Lisa Freedman):** Your committee begs to report the following bill, as amended:

Bill 53, An Act to revise the City of Toronto Acts, 1997 (Nos. 1 and 2), to amend certain public Acts in relation to municipal powers and to repeal certain private Acts relating to the City of Toronto / *Projet de loi 53, Loi révisant les lois de 1997 N<sup>os</sup> 1 et 2 sur la cité de Toronto, modifiant certaines lois d'intérêt public en ce qui concerne les pouvoirs municipaux et abrogeant certaines lois d'intérêt privé se rapportant à la cité de Toronto.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Shall the report be received and adopted? Agreed.

The bill is therefore ordered for third reading.

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### ARTS EDUCATION WEEK ACT, 2006

#### LOI DE 2006 SUR LA SEMAINE DE L'ÉDUCATION ARTISTIQUE

Ms. Mossop moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 118, An Act to make the fourth week in October Arts Education Week / *Projet de loi 118, Loi désignant la quatrième semaine d'octobre Semaine de l'éducation artistique.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

The member may wish to make a brief statement.

**Ms. Jennifer F. Mossop (Stoney Creek):** We know the importance of arts education intuitively, anecdotally and empirically. There are dozens of research studies that tell us about the importance of arts ed. for better test scores, self-esteem, self confidence, staying in school and better adult outcomes. What we have here, by setting aside the fourth week in October every year as Arts Education Week, is an opportunity to celebrate, to

honour and to manifest arts education throughout the province of Ontario.

### TALPIOT COLLEGE ACT, 2006

Mr. Zimmer moved first reading of the following bill:  
Bill Pr26, An Act respecting Talpiot College.

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Pursuant to standing order 84, the bill stands referred to the standing committee on regulations and private bills.

## STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

### POLICE SERVICES

**Hon. Monte Kwinter (Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services):** It's my great pleasure today to recognize a group of dedicated individuals who work diligently to make policing better in Ontario. I'm talking about the Ontario Association of Police Services Boards, or OAPSB. This is their second annual Queen's Park day, and they have met not only with me but also with various members of this Legislature. Many members of the OAPSB are in the gallery today, and we welcome you all. In particular, let me congratulate your new president, Bernie Morelli, of Hamilton. I look forward to the same forthright relationship I had with the outgoing president, Curly Everitt, of Blind River—just in time; they've just come in. Fortunately for the OAPSB and the government, Curly will still be around as past president to offer his sage advice and wisdom.

Queen's Park days are a chance to engage in constructive dialogue and to better understand one another. It's through days like this that we continue to build on a partnership that has proven to be strong and productive over many years.

The OAPSB is concerned about crime and safety, and so is the McGuinty government. We have listened to the OAPSB, and we have been able to resolve many of their issues. Let me mention just a few.

The association told us there were too many vacancies on police services boards across the province. I'm proud to say that we are addressing this, and today the number of vacancies is down from 48 to 27—a reduction of about 44%—and candidates are in the process of being appointed for 16 of those remaining vacancies. What's more, at the request of the association, we've lengthened the term of provincial appointments from two years to three, while the maximum term of office remains at six years.

Another issue that concerned the OAPSB was the Ontario municipal employees retirement system, or OMERS. As you know, our government is keeping its commitment to bring much-needed reform to the

OMERS system. We addressed these concerns through Bill 206, and we are providing for the creation of a new supplemental benefit plan for police, firefighters and paramedics, as well as the ability to bargain locally for enhanced pension benefits.

We also know that the association and its members are concerned about the cost of delivering police services, including the cost of recruiting, training and equipping their personnel. We recognize that police services boards bear the enormous responsibility of keeping Ontarians safe, and the McGuinty government is giving them the tools they need to meet this challenge. For example, we are providing more than \$68 million in perpetuity to help fund a total of 2,000 officers who soon will be policing the streets of small towns and big cities throughout Ontario. In particular, under our Safer Communities-1,000 Officers Partnership, we are providing an additional \$14 million in funding in 2006-07 to speed up the hiring and training of the remaining officers. If police services want to hire their allocations this year, they will be able to do so.

But that's not our only investment in policing. Through various grants and funding for special projects, my ministry provides police services with more than \$112 million annually, and the McGuinty government's Ontario municipal partnership fund also provides money for policing.

Other investments that should help local police services include the \$51-million package the Premier announced in January to help prosecutors and police get criminals with guns off our streets; the \$230,000 we provided to construct the replica clandestine drug lab at the Ontario Police College; and the deployment of specialized anti-gun and gang crown prosecutors to every region of the province, announced last week by my colleague the Attorney General. All these tools and all this funding help support our police services and police services boards across the province.

I believe it is a sign of a healthy relationship when individuals and organizations can talk frankly to one another, can agree and disagree and remain committed to their ideals. I'm proud to say that we have that kind of relationship with the OAPSB, and I look forward to more days like today, when we can listen to one another, exchange points of view and move forward together to ensure the safety of the people of Ontario.

1400

NATIONAL ACCESS  
AWARENESS WEEK  
SEMAINE NATIONALE  
POUR L'INTÉGRATION  
DES PERSONNES HANDICAPÉES

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur (ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires, ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones):** La semaine nationale pour l'intégration des personnes handicapées a débuté

dimanche au pays. La semaine nationale pour l'intégration des personnes handicapées a été instaurée il y a 20 ans pour que la population du Canada se remémore comment un jeune Canadien a inspiré toute une nation.

That young Canadian was Rick Hansen. In March 1985, he embarked on one of the most ambitious physical feats of all time, travelling 40,000 kilometres around the world in his wheelchair.

Hansen did it to raise awareness and money for spinal cord injury research and rehabilitation. The trip took him just over two years, and when he reached his hometown of Vancouver, British Columbia, in late May 1987, he had raised more than \$26 million for spinal cord research and had inspired a generation of Canadians. He changed the way the nation thought about what people with disabilities were capable of.

Today, approximately 1.5 million people in Ontario live with a disability. That is more than 13% of Ontario's population. As our baby boomer generation grows older, the number of people living with some form of disability relating to old age also grows. In fact, at some point in our lives every single person in this room can expect to have to deal with some kind of disability—every single person. Yet, as we're getting older and our physical limitations are increasing, the world around us is not adapting quickly enough. That needs to change.

Almost a year ago our government passed the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act. The act lays out a 20-year road map to make Ontario accessible to all people by 2025 through the development of new, mandatory accessibility standards for many of the most important areas of our lives, such as transportation and customer service.

But tough legislation can only address part of the problem. The bigger issue that we have to tackle is the social barriers. We need to convince the public that people with disabilities are not a small group, that accommodating them is not more trouble than it's worth, and that the rest of society is missing out by continuing to support a world where they cannot fully participate.

Unless we can dispel these antiquated ideas once and for all, Ontario has no hope of meeting its full potential on the world stage, because Ontario cannot possibly meet its full potential until all of our citizens are given the chance to meet theirs.

With that in mind, we are working with community and corporate partners. One of the programs I am particularly proud of is the Enabling Change partnership program. This program works with partners who have the expertise to be catalysts for change in the community and marketplace—organizations that want to play a leadership role in improving access for people with disabilities.

One of the Enabling Change partnerships that began last year was done with the Canadian Standards Association and was called Building Champions. Through this program, the CSA worked with seven partners to develop a voluntary customer service standard for serving customers with disabilities. This morning I had the pleasure of visiting the Shaw Festival, one of the seven "champion" organizations, to see the work they are doing



to make their facility more accessible to their patrons with disabilities.

In addition, my colleague the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities announced yesterday our government's investment of new funding to make Ontario's post-secondary system more accessible to students with disabilities.

With projects like these in the works and our new accessibility legislation guiding us, we have come a long way, but we still have a long way to go, and we are not going to be able to get there alone. If we want to be able to say that we live in a province where all citizens can fully participate, we are all going to have to make that a reality.

Today, at the beginning of National Access Awareness Week, I am thrilled to recognize David Onley and Tracy MacCharles, the chair and vice-chair of the Accessibility Standards Advisory Council, who are joining us in the Speaker's gallery.

J'encourage tous les membres de l'Assemblée à se rendre dans les collectivités de leur circonscription cette semaine pour souligner les réalisations des personnes et des organisations qui abolissent les obstacles, qui sont les champions du changement.

Rick Hansen a dit que si on caresse un rêve et qu'on a le courage de tenter de le réaliser, de grandes choses peuvent être accomplies.

Chaque personne ici présente est consciente de l'importance d'une participation à part entière et de l'égalité pour tous les Ontariens et Ontariennes ayant un handicap.

We all want Ontario to be a leader in building a world of true inclusion. We all want to leave our children a society where everyone is able to make the most of their own potential. It's an ambitious dream, but I think that Ontarians have the courage it takes. We know this is the right thing to do, and together we can accomplish great things.

## HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

### ÉTUDIANTS AU SECONDAIRE

**Hon. Sandra Pupatello (Minister of Education, minister responsible for women's issues):** I rise in the House today to announce another key initiative in the McGuinty government's strategy to help all students succeed in high school. A new strategic high school transition plan is being implemented for struggling grade 8 and 9 students that includes more teachers, intensive professional development and improved tracking of students on their progress.

The reason for action is clear: There are too many students facing an uphill battle towards graduation even before their first day of high school. In September, there will be 20,000 grade 8 students entering high school who are already at risk of dropping out before graduation.

Nous savons qu'environ 27 % des élèves de neuvième année de l'année dernière n'ont pas pu obtenir tous leurs crédits de première année.

Notre plan de transition entre la huitième et la neuvième année accordera au personnel enseignant les outils et les ressources dont il a besoin pour recevoir ces élèves dans des écoles secondaires accueillantes qui leur permettront de relever leurs défis personnels.

This plan is part of the McGuinty government's \$1.3-billion, multi-year student success strategy. It allows all students to customize their education based on their individual goals, skills and interests.

Over the coming months we're going to work with every school board to make sure programs are in place to help students who have been identified as dropping out. These will include a process for sharing student information between elementary and secondary schools; defined transition plans that include orientation activities, strategies and interventions; designated caring adults who will act as advocates; a first semester timetable that reflects students' interests and strengths; and a monitoring program with an intensive focus on the first two months of school.

In addition, we've delivered regional professional development sessions about successful high school transitions to superintendents and student success leaders from all of Ontario's district school boards.

Through a \$1.2-million government investment, board-directed training sessions are now providing intensive instruction on best practices and instructional strategies to 12,000 student success teachers, principals and other grade 8 and 9 educators.

This year the government provided \$89 million for an additional 1,300 high school teachers, including 800 new or designated student success teachers, to help struggling students. That investment has been boosted to \$110 million in 2006-07 to add 300 more high school teachers. We're confident that a grade 8 and 9 transition plan, as part of this overall student success strategy, will help Ontario graduate 85% of all of our students by 2010. That's up from just 68% when the McGuinty government took office—71% in 2004-05, so we are already doing better. We're proud that the first phase of the student success strategy in 2003 has already helped graduate an additional 6,000 students last year alone. Ontario will prosper tomorrow because we are investing in our youth today.

I want to pay special tribute to the principal, teachers, educators and especially the students of Lord Dufferin school, where I spent some time this morning with Chair Sheila Ward from the Toronto District School Board, where we made a tremendous announcement and I met a number of the students in the grade 8 class who are very much looking forward to their move to high school next year.

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Responses.  
1410

## POLICE SERVICES

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North):** I'm pleased today to respond to the remarks made by the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services on the



OAPSB annual Queen's Park lobby day. On behalf of our leader, John Tory, and the members of our caucus, I want to welcome all the members that are here joining us today. I want you to know that we are on your side.

I heard over and over again—I had a meeting this morning, and listening to the minister's comments, you'd actually think he had made some progress. However, there are a number of issues that are outstanding, and I'm not hearing any leadership coming from the minister and from that government, the same as we're not seeing any leadership at Caledonia.

Bill 103, for an example, the Independent Police Review Act: The Ontario Association of Police Services Boards requests that the ministry consider their concerns as part of its review before Bill 103 proceeds to second reading. We haven't heard of Bill 103 or where it's come from ever since it was introduced by the Attorney General a while back.

There's a lot around police recruitment and training and also on provincial responsibility for mental health patients. The OAPSB recommends that the government of Ontario should provide progress updates on its mental health strategy to address concerns raised by OAPSB and other policy stakeholders regarding responsibility for mental health patients. There has been no movement in that area.

The base-rate increase for the victims' crisis and referral service, the VCARS program: OAPSB believes that all VCARS should receive an immediate base-rate increase.

We hear this each day in our ridings, and we're looking for leadership from the minister and from this government on a number of issues that have been addressed here today by this board. I look forward to hearing other comments, and I look forward to this government actually taking action on these issues.

#### NATIONAL ACCESS AWARENESS WEEK

**Mr. Gerry Martiniuk (Cambridge):** I'd like to respond to the remarks of the Minister of Community and Social Services. On behalf of John Tory and the PC caucus, I'd like to thank all organizations across Ontario for their dedication in improving accessibility for those who are disabled. During accessibility week, we can thank the Ontarians who go out of their way daily to make life more accessible for disabled persons.

Accessibility is vital to the everyday lives of those who are disabled. By increasing accessibility, life can become a little less hectic and hopefully a little more enjoyable. I congratulate employers who make the workplace a more welcoming environment for employees who have a difficult time possibly getting around the office or performing certain tasks. It is not that they are not capable of the job; we just have to remove the barriers so they can do their job. It is great to see Ontarians taking a lead role making life more accessible for the disabled.

It is, however, a shame that Premier McGuinty has again broken a promise that affects the disabled. The

government should be seriously looking again at Bill 107, the Human Rights Code Amendment Act, 2006, and the adverse impact it will have on disabled persons. I would like to quote David Lepofsky, the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act Alliance's human rights reform representative, who says that this bill betrays the McGuinty government's important understanding with the Ontario disability community. "Dalton McGuinty promised effective enforcement in his new disability act." I hope that Premier McGuinty listens to the AODA Alliance and takes their concerns seriously.

In closing, I would again, on behalf of the Progressive Conservative caucus, applaud all Ontarians who every day make life a little more accessible for disabled persons.

#### HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

**Mr. Frank Klees (Oak Ridges):** In response to the Minister of Education, she is following in the footsteps of her predecessor. As Cathy Dandy from the Toronto Parent Network said, "The government hasn't done the one thing they should have done, and they railed on the Tories about this, and that was update the funding for teacher salaries. Because that hasn't been done, because that was the number one recommendation that Radwanski made and it's been ignored, we remain in trouble and it is the Liberals' fault." She went on to say, "The fundamental problem was that Gerard Kennedy was very good at public messaging but the reality was ... the Liberals cleverly promised only targeted investments ... but we expected them to rebuild the system and that hasn't happened."

Today we have another announcement. There's no money with it. We have a \$100-million deficit in Toronto school boards, and this minister—

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Thank you. Responses.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina):** To the Minister of Education: I went to the press conference thinking we were going to have yet another big announcement that would bring about revolutionary changes to our education system, and I didn't hear anything that was of any value, in my view.

She introduced this announcement today as a "key initiative." You look at the announcement and you ask, "What is key about this?" Here is what she says: "A process for sharing student information between elementary and secondary schools." I thought we were doing this all the time. Aren't we doing this?

**Ms. Kathleen O. Wynne (Don Valley West):** No.

**Mr. Marchese:** Oh. And what is this process? Maybe the government and the member from Don Valley West will share their bright ideas on what this process is that we don't know anything about. "Defined transition plans that include orientation activities, strategies and interventions" is vague language that means nothing. Maybe the member from Don Valley West has some idea about what this key initiative is, but from reading this, I have no clue.



It talks about “designated caring adults to act as advocates.” Who are these people? Are they in the system now? Is the minister hiring some new people? Do we have the money for them? Are they teachers? Are they parents? Who are they? The language is so vague that it’s literally meaningless.

“A first semester timetable that reflects students’ interests and strengths.” Okay, what does it mean? I have no clue. “A monitoring program with an intensive focus on the first two months of school”: I have no clue what this is, and this is offered as a key initiative?

Yet again, the minister drags me out to a press conference with the idea that maybe there’s something important, and we get so little that I’m embarrassed to keep going to these press conferences. There’s nothing here that says, “I am creating a line that says we are going to hire more librarians and guidance counsellors, and this line will tell you how many we’re going to hire.” There is no such line that indicates to me, and to those of us who care about having more librarians and guidance counsellors, that we’re actually going to get more librarians. There’s nothing here that talks about a curriculum review that deals with some of the problems that students are having with a curriculum that actually forces some kids out of our education system. There’s nothing here that speaks about specialist teachers in grades 7 and 8 regarding the teaching of math and science.

This announcement wasn’t that announcement. I’m surprised the minister gets up and says this is a key initiative. God bless this government.

#### NATIONAL ACCESS AWARENESS WEEK

**Mr. Rosario Marchese (Trinity–Spadina):** The Minister of Community and Social Services says, “The bigger issue that we have to tackle is the social barrier. We need to convince the public that people with disabilities are not a small group, that accommodating them is not more trouble than it’s worth and that the rest of society is missing out by continuing to support a world where they cannot fully participate.”

She points out that we have 1.5 million people in Ontario who live with a disability, and she is quite right. Yet they passed a bill, which I attacked viciously, that says we are going to give access for private and public institutions over a 20-year period. I said to the minister, “People with disabilities can’t wait; they need it today.” She says, “Oh, but we’ve got to convince people.” The people we have to convince are the Liberal Party and their members who have decided that we can’t give access for 20 years. I said to the Liberal government, to that minister and to the previous minister, we need to give access today, not in 20 years’ time when people will be long dead and gone.

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We have a bill here that talks about this small initiative and says, “We’ve got to do more.” I say to the

minister, it’s your duty and obligation to do more. We can’t wait and they cannot wait for 20 years.

I urge you, Minister: Get down to do your job. Deal with a bill that leaves everything, from timelines to incentives to enforcement, at the discretion of the minister. The bill that you passed a year ago ensures very little. If you’re really truly, committed, do something about it.

#### VISITORS

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur (Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for francophone affairs):** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: On that positive note, I would like to introduce David Onley and Tracy MacCharles, the chair and vice-chair of the Accessibility Standards Advisory Council. I want to thank them for helping us to improve accessibility to all Ontarians.

#### ORAL QUESTIONS

##### ELECTRICITY SUPPLY

**Mr. John Tory (Leader of the Opposition):** My question is for the Minister of Energy. Minister, your election platform, the McGuinty election platform, said, “We will shut down Ontario’s coal-burning power plants by 2007.” Reflecting the expedient, slipshod nature of that original McGuinty promise, now broken, it was later amended to say that coal generation will be shut down by 2007—all plants except Nanticoke, which would close in 2009. Is this still the case? Are you sticking to this broken, revised version of the McGuinty promise? Yes or no would be a very simple answer as to whether it’s all plants by the end of 2007, Nanticoke by 2009. Yes or no?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan (Minister of Energy):** The government remains committed to the replacement of coal-fired generation in Ontario. We remain committed to that goal in spite of the obstacles, in spite of the opposition of people like the Leader of the Opposition, because we believe very strongly that we should move heaven and earth to reduce the emissions associated with coal and do it in a responsible and timely fashion. Our goal has been and will continue to be the reduction of the emissions associated with coal, and, I say to the Leader of the Opposition, most particularly CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, which no clean coal technology gets.

Unlike Conservatives in this province, we support Kyoto. We support those undertakings. We believe that we have to work to mitigate the effects of greenhouse gases.

The answer is, we remain committed to that goal. There are enormous challenges associated with it, but we will do so, and we will achieve our goals: improving air quality without sacrificing reliability of electricity or the supplies available to all Ontarians.

**Mr. Tory:** The minister talks a lot about everything he believes in except answering questions. The fact of the



matter is that we didn't ask you about the goal; we asked you about the timetable. In fact, the original McGuinty promise made in the election campaign, like so many of them, was very short and very clear, but it's also very broken. It said all plants closed by the end of 2007. So when you broke the promise—Mr. McGuinty broke it, and then you revised it and said all plants closed by the end of 2007, except Nanticoke by 2009.

I understand your goal is to close the plants. We're talking today about the timetable that you're going to use to close those plants. The fact is you've talked about moving heaven and earth. As the member for Erie-Lincoln said, the only thing you've moved is a bit of dirt so far in terms of putting any plants in place to replace that coal power.

Let me ask you one more time—it only requires a yes or no answer—is the timetable still the same? All plants closed by the end of 2007, except Nanticoke by 2009? That's the broken promise revised timetable. Is that still the one you're operating under? Yes or no?

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** Let me say, first of all, that unlike the Leader of the Opposition we are committed to reducing those emissions. Let me just relay to the Leader of the Opposition and his assistant from Fort Erie-Lincoln what has actually happened, according to the Independent Electricity System Operator. Since we took office, generation from coal plants is down 18.7%. That is a lot more than a pile of dirt. SO<sub>2</sub> emissions are down 32.5%. That's a lot more than a pile of dirt. NO<sub>x</sub>: NO<sub>x</sub> tonnes are down 33%. That's a lot more than a tonne of dirt. Mercury is down 28.6%. That is a lot more than a tonne of dirt, I say to the Leader of the Opposition. CO<sub>2</sub> is down 18%.

Will you please tell your federal friends to recommit to Kyoto and join us in moving a lot more than—

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Thank you. *Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. Minister of Education. Supplementary?

**Mr. Tory:** As usual, still no answer to the question.

You've had, for almost three years now, various experts from all corners telling you that this policy of closing these plants before you have any replacement power in place was irresponsible and ill conceived. That's what we're interested in here, the fact that you are going to close down these plants on some timetable or other, but we're worried you're actually going to do it in such a way as to imperil the power supply of this province.

Don't take it from me. Paul Bradley, undoubtedly a relative of the Minister of Tourism, is the vice-president of generation development at your own OPA, and he said in today's *Globe and Mail*, Murray Campbell's article, that none of your replacement power will be online by the end of 2007. He says, "No way, not by the end of 2007." So this election promise is just like the one where you said you wouldn't raise taxes and you brought in the biggest tax increase in the history of the province. You know you're going to break the promise, you know

you're even going to break the revised broken promise version of the promise, but you won't stand up and say so.

I'll ask you one more time. It is a simple yes or no answer. Is the timetable still that all coal plants will be closed by the end of 2007, with the exception of Nanticoke by 2009? Is that the timetable? Yes or no? You owe it to the people to be clear and straight and to give an answer to that question.

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** We owe the people of Ontario cleaner air and we're continuing to move towards that goal.

I ask the Leader of the Opposition, who has no platform, who has no point of view, why is it you said on April 25, "The elimination of coal-fired plants is a good goal," and then the next day, on April 26, said that coal could not be ruled out, and then the next day, "I don't know how you could rule coal in or out"? You can't have it all ways. People like the Leader of the Opposition don't want us to clean up the air. We're going to clean up the air. People like the Leader of the Opposition are trying to stop us in the interest of profit and in the interest of increasing our dependence on foreign sources of energy. We will move toward cleaning up the atmosphere. We will protect the Kyoto accord. We will stand behind the Kyoto accord. Join us in that. Stand up for Ontario and stand up for the airshed that stretches from Windsor to the Quebec border before it's too late.

## TTC LABOUR DISPUTE

**Mr. John Tory (Leader of the Opposition):** No answer from the man who was importing thousands of megawatts of power yesterday from the very people who are shipping the pollution to Ontario.

My question is for the Acting Premier. Ontarians want to live in a province where the rule of law is upheld and where those who break the law are held accountable for their actions. Yesterday millions of people in the GTA—commuters, drivers—awoke to find their transit system gone as a result of an ill-advised and illegal strike by the TTC workers and their union leadership. We want to know from you exactly when your government first found out about this. We want to go back over this because you failed to take any action to notify them and to do everything you could to head this off at the pass and stop this from happening. I want to know exactly what happened and when, on Sunday, so that the people know you had the time to do more than you did. What did you do, and when?

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**Hon. George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** I will, by way of supplementary, refer that to the Minister of Labour, who can answer those details, as he did yesterday.

But I will take the first—

**Mr. Tim Hudak (Erie-Lincoln):** He's hiding under his desk again.

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** Oh, you again?



I will take the first opportunity to correct the record left by the honourable member, because he knows well that in the one minute, or the 40 seconds, he dedicated to the issue of yesterday's illegal action, the honourable member misspoke on several points—factual outcomes are not apparently very much a concern to the Leader of the Opposition.

The reality is very, very clear, and the mayor of our city has expressed this very well. The circumstances that arose were ones we stand in opposition to, and the Ontario Labour Relations Board made a ruling that was not appropriately considered. These events unfolded in a fashion that no one could have appropriately predicted, and for the honourable member to suggest otherwise is just plain un-factual.

**Mr. Tory:** The fact of the matter is, we didn't ask you what you thought about it; we asked what you did about it. The fact is, millions of people were affected by this and you did less than you should have to head this off and make sure this didn't happen. It happened, it was an illegal strike, it was ill-advised and everybody shares that view. But they also share the view that you could have done more and should have done more. People were angry about that.

Can you assure this House, given the gravity of this kind of situation and the event that happened yesterday, that in the event a complaint is filed pursuant to the Labour Relations Act, this will be moved to the top of the list, investigated aggressively and completely, which is the legal responsibility of the ministry, and a signal will be sent that this kind of conduct, this kind of illegal strike, is not going to be tolerated in the province of Ontario?

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** The Minister of Labour.

**Hon. Steve Peters (Minister of Labour):** It's obvious that the honourable leader didn't take my advice yesterday and lean over to his right and speak to a former Minister of Labour. If the honourable leader knew what he was talking about, he would understand that the Ontario Labour Relations Board is an arm's-length agency of the government and it would be totally inappropriate for the Minister of Labour to interfere. Obviously you need some lessons in labour relations. As well, I think it's important to point out that it would be inappropriate for us to speculate on any actions that would be taken. Perhaps you should again ask the former Minister of Labour about her role when she stood in this place and the role the Minister of Labour plays.

I'm very proud of our track record. We have restored fairness and balance to labour relations in this province. There were 76 work stoppages in 2005, hundreds less than what happened when you were in government. We have brought fairness and balance back. We respect the Ontario Labour Relations Board—

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Thank you. Final supplementary.

**Mr. Tory:** The commuters and businesses of Ontario saw what a fine job you're doing yesterday. They certainly got a good taste of that. What I suggested to you

was entirely, properly the role of the Minister of Labour. All I asked you was—and you refuse to answer it, as did the Acting Premier—if a complaint is filed, will you move it right to the top of the list and aggressively investigate it to make sure that the signal is sent that this kind of thing won't be tolerated?

There's a disturbing trend setting in in this province where people seem to think they can do things and get away with it. People walk off the job for a day, and millions of people are adversely affected by this. Nothing happens. People want to punch and kick each other, and persons unknown destroy a power station. No consequences seem to flow from that.

What assurances can you give this House, Acting Premier, that people in Ontario can be assured that the rule of law is going to be confirmed and upheld and you're going to do everything you can to make sure that is the case in this province? What are you doing?

**Hon. Mr. Peters:** I'd refer that to the Acting Premier.

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** I'd say to the honourable member that it's always very convenient for the honourable member to drop in from time to time for an hour, and whatever issue happens to be at the top of his platter is the issue that he chooses that day —

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. I'm having great difficulty hearing the Acting Premier's response.

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** Mr. Speaker, the honourable member seeks by his questioning to create a circumstance where he would have us condoning the actions that were taken yesterday. We do no such thing. We, like everybody else, expressed the frustration on behalf of the people of Ontario.

For the honourable member, himself a learned lawyer, pretending in this Legislature, as he tends to do in question period every day, that the circumstances were somehow preventable when there was no highlight, no expectation that this would occur, except right at the time that people chose to walk off the job—we will abide by the rule of law, and we will seek out, on behalf of the people of Ontario, to ensure that it is appropriately taken up—

**The Speaker:** Thank you.

## ELECTRICITY SUPPLY

**Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora–Rainy River):** My question is for the Minister of Energy. Today, Canadian Press reports that the Minister of Energy, when asked by the media, was physically unable to “repeat his promise to close the coal-fired plants by 2009.”

Minister, I am sending you a copy of a McGuinty government press release from just a year ago, dated June 15, 2005, entitled, “McGuinty Government Unveils Bold Plan to Clean Up Ontario's Air.” Can you please read the highlighted sections of your own press release that lay out your coal promise, and can you tell the people of Ontario if you're going to keep your promise to close



Lambton coal-fired station by 2007 and Nanticoke coal-fired station by 2009?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan (Minister of Energy):** We remain committed to reducing the emissions associated with coal-fired generation—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Order. Minister of Energy.

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** Let me remind the leader of the third party of some things he said in the last couple of years. “We will close or convert Ontario’s coal-fired generating stations by 2007.” That’s the NDP platform in 2003. “We will continue to live the effects of the coal mistakes for decades to come. Some of us will die before our time, victims of coal-generated air pollution.” Public Power, page 109.

There is no doubt that the challenge associated with closing coal plants, with getting coal out of our energy mix, is challenging. We have reduced emissions in the first two and a half years of our agenda. We remain committed to reducing those emissions quickly, and ensuring the reliability of energy supply in Ontario.

**Mr. Hampton:** Gee, Speaker, I even underlined them for him.

I’ll repeat it. Maybe he can find it now: “Lambton generating station ... will be replaced by the end of 2007.... Nanticoke generating station ... will have units closed through 2008, with the last to close in early 2009.” I underlined it. I put it in colour for you.

Minister, it’s so smoggy today, you can’t even see the CN tower from here. But there is one thing that’s crystal clear: Dalton McGuinty’s promise to shut down Ontario’s coal-fired plants is another McGuinty Liberal broken promise.

You know, Nike makes running shoes; Pepsi makes cola; and Dalton McGuinty just breaks his promises. That’s where we’re at.

But my question is this, Minister: After all the rhetoric, after all the holier-than-thou pronouncements from the McGuinty government, why should the people of Ontario believe or trust any promise from the McGuinty—

**The Speaker:** The question has been asked. Minister.

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** What they can believe is that coal-fired generation is down 18.7% in two and a half years. That is more than the hot air that you’re full of. What they can believe is that SO<sub>2</sub> emissions are down 32.5%—that is about cleaning up the air. NO<sub>x</sub> emissions are down 33%—that’s about cleaner air. CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, which is about Kyoto and meeting our undertakings, are down 18%. Mercury is down 28.6%. Yet the leader of the third party writes to the Premier and tells us to keep coal-fired plants open as long as we can.

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There’s no doubt that this is a challenging goal. Cleaning up the air, cleaning up the mess we see today, is a challenge; there is no doubt. In fact, when they built Niagara Falls, they wanted to replace coal with so-called white coal.

We remain committed. We remain committed to cleaning up the airshed to ensure that we don’t all look back—

**The Speaker:** Thank you. Final supplementary.

**Mr. Hampton:** I wanted to help the minister; that’s why I underlined it and put it in colour.

I want to read your promise again: “Lambton generating station will be replaced by the end of 2007. Nanticoke coal-fired generating station will have units closed through 2008, with the last unit to close in early 2009.” This is another McGuinty broken promise, but this one is a huge letdown for the people of Ontario, because people are worried about dirty air. But, you know, it is another example of Dalton McGuinty saying anything in order to win votes, with no inkling, no idea, no plan of how to get the job done.

My question again, Minister: Why should good people across Ontario believe or trust anything Dalton McGuinty says from here on?

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** If the leader of the third party is so concerned about the quality of the air, why did he write to the leader of Ontario, the Premier, and ask him to keep these coal-fired plants running for 20 years? Why would you do that?

We have been moving quickly to close the plants. We have been moving to get the emissions down. We’re going to continue in that track. We’re going to continue in spite of the opposition from members opposite, like Mr. Hampton. We will continue to see improvement in the quality of air resulting from our energy mix supply. We believe that keeping our focus on those emissions, ensuring that we bring down all of the emissions associated with coal, including the CO<sub>2</sub>, remains and ought to be a key goal of any government in this province to deal with the quality-of-air challenge we have. We are continuing to aggressively pursue that policy.

## KYOTO PROTOCOL

**Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora–Rainy River):** When the McGuinty government can’t keep a promise, they just make it up as they go along.

Acting Premier, Ontario’s working families are worried about climate change. They are worried about global warming, about pollution heating up the planet, about wild weather like floods, tornadoes, droughts, and hot and smoggy days like we have across southern Ontario today. We know that Stephen Harper has cut and run on the Kyoto accord. But we want to know, does Dalton McGuinty remain committed to meeting Ontario’s Kyoto emission targets, and if so, will the McGuinty government table your Kyoto plan here today?

**Hon. George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** Minister of the Environment.

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten (Minister of the Environment):** Let me be absolutely clear to the leader of the third party that this government supports the steps taken in this country to move forward with respect to the Kyoto protocol. The Minister of Energy at the time, Minister



Cansfield, and I were privileged to attend the UN climate change conference in Montreal in December of last year. At that time, I signed, on behalf of this government, a declaration to continue Ontario's efforts to fight climate change. We are signing documents, and our actions are louder than those words.

As we move forward in this province to have a future without coal, we will see a reduction of 30 megatons of greenhouse gases—the single largest action being taken by any government in this country to move forward. That is a significant indication of how firm our commitment is to tackle the most pressing issue of our time, which is climate change.

**Mr. Hampton:** Obviously the Minister of the Environment isn't speaking to the Minister of Energy. The Minister of Energy can't bring himself to repeat the phrase that the coal plants are going to close. So far, Dalton McGuinty's response on Kyoto has been either breaking a promise or, otherwise, disappointing silence.

Other provinces are showing leadership. Manitoba is going to go it alone. They've got a plan; they're going to implement it. Quebec is going to go it alone.

Just three years ago, Dalton McGuinty said he supported Kyoto. During the election, he said he was committed to meeting our Kyoto targets. I ask again, where is the McGuinty government's commitment now? Where is the McGuinty government's plan to meet our Kyoto targets? Table it today.

**Hon. Ms. Broten:** I guess the leader of the third party perhaps does not examine some of the steps that our government is taking, which are real and positive steps, to tackle this critical issue. For example, requiring 5% ethanol in gasoline by 2007 will achieve the GHG reductions equivalent to taking 200,000 cars and light trucks off the road each and every year. If you paid attention to what happened in Saskatchewan last week, it's a clear indication that our government is ahead of where the federal government is. We will meet a 5% ethanol content by 2007, and we will meet double that by 2010, when the rest of the provinces are going to catch up with Ontario. Each and every day we take steps to ensure that we have a future in this province where we tackle the issue of climate change, and ethanol is but one more example where we are doing that.

**Mr. Hampton:** I've asked twice: Where is the McGuinty government's Kyoto plan? I know why I'm not getting an answer. This is from David Suzuki. David Suzuki is the one you invite whenever you want to hold a photo op but you don't want any questions asked. This is what he said in his report last year: "Ontario does not have a climate change plan." That's what David Suzuki says.

We know that Stephen Harper is backing away from Canada's Kyoto commitments. That makes it even more important that individual provinces like Ontario step up and implement the Kyoto emission targets. Manitoba has a plan to meet the Kyoto targets by 2012. Quebec has a plan. But, as David Suzuki says, the McGuinty government has no plan to meet these targets. It's nowhere in sight.

Tomorrow is the Premiers' conference in Gimli, Manitoba. Will you commit that Dalton McGuinty will stand up tomorrow and announce that Ontario is joining Manitoba and Quebec—

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** The question has been asked.

**Hon. Ms. Broten:** I say to the leader of the third party, David Suzuki joins us when we make announcements because he knows we are the North American leader in clean air in this province. Let me tell you what he has also said in his document, on page 21: "The Ontario government is implementing a fairly ambitious agenda that will tackle both air pollution and climate change."

Here are a few of things that we're doing: reducing vehicle traffic on our roads by investing \$838 million in public transit in the GTA; creating a 1.8-million-acre greenbelt to limit urban sprawl; doubling the retail sales tax rebate on hybrid vehicles from \$1,000 to \$2,000; encouraging Ontarians to conserve electricity; toughening by 23% our emissions-testing standards for cars and light trucks; introducing the toughest emissions-testing standards on heavy duty vehicles in North America; and refocusing roadside testing for those vehicles that pollute the most. That's our—

**The Speaker:** Thank you. New question.

#### NATIVE LAND DISPUTE

**Mr. Robert W. Runciman (Leeds–Grenville):** A question to the Acting Premier: We learned today that Superior Court Justice David Marshall has summoned the Attorney General of Ontario to court to answer why your government continues to ignore the court order to enforce the law in the Caledonia situation. This extraordinary action was taken by the judge, in his words, "to ensure that peace in the community is maintained under the rule of law." In non-legal terms, it would seem that His Lordship would like to know why your government is incapable or unwilling to enforce the law. Can the minister tell this House the answer to that question before the Attorney General is hauled before the court to do so?

**Hon. George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** The minister responsible for aboriginal affairs.

**Hon. David Ramsay (Minister of Natural Resources, minister responsible for aboriginal affairs):** I know my colleague across the way knows that when you have an action before the court, it's inappropriate for the government to comment on that. The only comment I can make is that the Ontario government will be present in that court on Thursday.

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**Mr. Runciman:** If you won't answer the question in this House, hopefully you'll answer it before the judge. I describe this as extraordinary; "extraordinary" is probably an understatement. This is the first time in memory that an Attorney General has been called on the carpet for not discharging his constitutional respon-



sibilities. This is ultimately the Attorney General's responsibility, and I ask you, why is he, as the chief law officer, not enforcing his responsibility? Why is that occurring?

**Hon. David Ramsay:** I think it's fair for the member to tell the House that, of course, the judge is calling all parties to the previous court hearing to come before him, including the Attorney General of Ontario. As I said to the member, Ontario will be there at court and will represent our position there.

### BUILDING CODE

**Mr. Peter Tabuns (Toronto-Danforth):** My question is to the Acting Premier. Today, two of your ministers have talked about their commitment to Kyoto and about how much this government is doing to meet the climate change challenge in this country. The building efficiency standards proposed in your amendments to the Ontario building code are being described by environmentalists and by efficiency experts as weak. Proposed efficiency standards for homes fall drastically short of what is economically and technically feasible. Even your own conservation officer agrees. He's on the record as saying that the proposed standards are "barely a step forward when they should be a leap." My question is, will your government bring in home efficiency standards that are real, effective and will meet Kyoto standards?

**Hon. George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** To the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

**Hon. John Gerretsen (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing):** Thank you for the question, because it is a very important issue. I can tell you that we are currently looking at the building code standards to see what should be implemented in the future. There has been ongoing dialogue with all of the interested parties in this particular issue, whether they're builders, whether they're in the environmental community, however they're involved in the building industry.

I can tell you that in the end we will be coming up with the highest possible standards. We're looking at it right now. No final decisions have been made. I invite the member to stay tuned for the actual building code that will be introduced in the near future.

**Mr. Tabuns:** Acting Premier, even your own conservation officer is criticizing what the government is proposing. We've just heard that speaking will continue and continue and continue. Your own conservation officer said that this will be a lost opportunity for significant energy conservation efficiency if standards for homes are not set at a much higher level than one that has come forward in discussion papers put out by your document. You've been talking for the last three years about being a leader in North America. So when will the talking end, and when will you actually bring forward a plan that will show leadership?

**Hon. Mr. Gerretsen:** I can tell you that an awful lot of consultation has taken place on this particular issue.

We've set up advisory panels that are reporting back to us at this point in time, and we know that the amendments will include issues such as increased energy efficiency requirements for houses, including detached, semi-detached and row housing; increased energy efficiency requirements for commercial buildings and large-scale residential buildings; and energy-efficient labelling for houses; as well as changes to enable the use of green technologies.

We are the leaders in this, and we're going to be the leaders in this after we get through with these changes. We're doing a broad sector of consultations, and we look forward to hearing the member's views on this as well, as we progress in this matter.

### DRUG LEGISLATION

**Mr. Jeff Leal (Peterborough):** I have a question today for the Minister of Long-Term Care, on behalf of hard-working pharmacists in the province of Ontario.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Order.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. I can wait. Order.

The member for Peterborough.

**Mr. Leal:** I am asking a question on behalf of the hard-working pharmacists in Ontario, whom I offered to meet with last Saturday morning in Peterborough, and they said they were too busy to meet me. And in fact—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. I'm having great difficulty hearing the member from Peterborough.

**Mr. Leal:** I've been following the consultations on our proposed drug legislation closely and I'm seeing a lot of positive feedback from patient groups, generic companies and seniors about proposed improvements to our drug system. I know as well that our government is listening to pharmacists. I understand that amendments are already being made to our proposed legislation to address the concerns that they have. Minister, can you tell me more about how we're amending the legislation to address concerns of pharmacists?

**Hon. George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** First off, I think it would be very appropriate to acknowledge the excellent question from the member for Peterborough. This is the member in the community of Peterborough who's delivering a new \$250-million hospital and a family health team spread across the breadth of Peterborough and the county, which is going to dramatically enhance the quality of care. We're working very—

**Mr. Tim Hudak (Erie-Lincoln):** Who wrote this question?

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** Oh, you should try for another question, Mr. Hudak.

I think the honourable member has touched on the issue of pharmacists in the context of Bill 102. We've been working, through the Ontario Pharmacists' Association, making improvements in our package of reforms



designed to get the best drugs to Ontarians at the best possible price.

Already yesterday we indicated that we're going to move back on our position with respect to the cap. That is a \$13-million benefit to pharmacy, and true committee work in anticipation of the work done on clause-by-clause. We would anticipate bringing amendments in a variety of areas designed to enhance the quality of the bill overall.

**Mr. Leal:** Thank you for clarifying what a good working relationship we have with the Ontario association of pharmacists. I know that pharmacists will be very pleased with—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Peterborough.

**Mr. Leal:** I know that our government has a great deal of regard for the expertise of pharmacists and the larger role they can play in the health care system. I know that we're making pharmacists key members of our family health teams, and that our government in this legislation wants for the first time to recognize pharmacists for the front-line role they play in patient care.

I also want to know, when we move to utilize the expertise of pharmacists and the new pharmacy council—Minister, can you tell me more about this council?

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** For something like 17 years, the Ontario Pharmacists' Association has been asking the government of Ontario for an opportunity to participate in more of a partnership model. One of the ideas that has come forward, as the opposition critic just mentioned, is the idea that the pharmacy council, which we proposed as the mechanism by which the government and pharmacists would work together in shaping pharmacy for the future, be included in the legislation.

*Interjection.*

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** We're very open-minded to that. The honourable member is derisive about these points, but at each and every opportunity—

**Ms. Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt):** That's because it should have been in there from the start.

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** Oh, yeah.

At each and every opportunity, we've been taking advantage of the chance to work in a consultative fashion, to take opportunities, through amendment, to address challenges that might occur. This will of course be the case in this circumstance, and I look forward as Bill 102 reports back to this House to see that it will enjoy strong support at third reading.

## EMERGENCY SERVICES

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North):** My question today is for the Minister of Finance. I'm sure all members of the House are delighted to see such a large representation here today from the police services boards across Ontario, and I appreciate the fact that the OAPSB has arranged this lobby day here at Queen's Park.

I've had the opportunity to meet with them, and I'm especially concerned by the information we have

received about emergency service labour costs. I note that since 2000, wages have increased by an average of 5% annually, outstripping the other sectors, which are averaging around 2% to 3%. Minister, can you tell the House what you, as Minister of Finance, are prepared to do to assist the police services boards and municipalities to control these costs?

**Hon. Greg Sorbara (Minister of Finance, Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet):** When I hear the information provided by my friend, I think of the work done by my colleague the Minister of Government Services in negotiating contracts for the collective agreements for which we're directly responsible. I should tell him that the Ontario municipal partnership fund provides specific support for these kinds of services, and indeed the policing costs under the partnership fund take special care to speak to the additional burdens of policing, particularly in the northern and rural communities. In that fund, over the course of the past two years, sir, we have increased our commitment to municipalities by about \$200 million.

It may not be enough in the view of the member opposite, but I think we're going a very long way to help municipal police boards across the province meet their requirements.

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**Mr. Dunlop:** You've talked around the issue, but as you know, the OAPSB has made specific requests to your ministry, which have included issues such as the Ontario health premium, your health tax; retention pay; and court security costs, which in a lot of cases are running rampant in some areas. Minister, are you prepared to meet with the OAPSB and discuss how the province will assist the boards? If so, when will that occur and when can you expect to report back to the House on the answer to those questions?

**Hon. Mr. Sorbara:** I have obviously had a number of requests to meet from a variety of organizations across the province where there are pressures relating to cost. I simply repeat to my friend that what we have achieved and the equity we have achieved through the Ontario municipal partnership fund has gone a very long way toward meeting the requirements of municipalities. Let us remember, sir, that police service boards operate under the umbrella of municipal councils, and there is an ongoing dialogue and relationship between AMO, individual municipalities, representatives in my ministry and indeed with my colleague the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

I think the dialogue is at a very high level, but if there's other information we need to be informed of, certainly I would be interested in hearing that information.

## ONTARIO HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

**Mr. Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre):** A question to the Acting Premier: Sir, more and more community



groups and organizations are expressing concern and opposition to your government's so-called human rights reform. They explain that you've consulted with lawyers but you haven't talked to the people who use the human rights commission on a daily basis and the organizations they represent. They've got serious concerns about your proposed legislation, which takes away significant rights that are now entrenched in the Human Rights Code. Will your government delay proceeding with second reading of this bill and simply agree to work with the people most affected by these so-called reforms so that we can create real improvement in the enforcement of human rights in Ontario?

**Hon. George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** As a long-serving member of the Ontario Legislature, this member knows very well that this is an issue that has been around for a long time. His characterization that meetings or consultations occurred only with lawyers is of course not borne out in the truth. In reality, he may be a lawyer but Joel Richler's role as chair of the Canadian Jewish Congress led him to say this: "CJC applauds the government for the proposed creation of an anti-racism secretariat and a disability-rights secretariat within the commission." Buzz Hargrove—I don't know him to be a lawyer: "We share the view of many that the current system of guaranteeing and enforcing human rights standards in Ontario needs reform.... The introduction of Bill 107 should be used as an opportunity to create a leading edge and accessible system to address the equality issues of Ontarians...."

I think the point taken is that over a long period of time—a couple of decades, I believe—people have been working on this issue. The consultations were broad. We're always listening as we move forward, but the time for reform is upon us, and the initiatives undertaken are ones the government continues to support.

**Mr. Kormos:** Sir, today leaders from the Urban Alliance on Race Relations, the Canadian Arab Federation and Asian Community AIDS Services joined what have been literally thousands of others in asking this government to stop forging ahead with Bill 107. They say that taking away their legal right to an investigation—because that's what the commission does, investigations and provide legal support—isn't going to make their cases move any faster. In fact, your proposals are going to strip the most liminalized people in this province of their ability to fight for their human rights and force them to pay out of pocket to fight discrimination.

Will you delay second reading of the bill and agree to work with these people—the people most affected by the so-called reforms—so we can create real improvements rather than your artificial ones?

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** Obviously, through the legislative process, we're always using the opportunity, in committee as an example, to examine legislation and hear from a wide variety of Ontarians.

But I don't think it's appropriate for the honourable member to pretend his way through this as if there's a

consensus that formed around the views he has spoken of, that he is the voice, or is using the voice, of all those affected.

Hugh Tye, executive director of the Hamilton Mountain Legal and Community Services said, "This (human rights reform) is something numerous community groups have asked for, for too long. We all recognize the problems—let's get on with fixing them." That's a voice of people working right at the community level.

Similarly, Robert Sexsmith, secretary of the board of directors of the Advocacy Centre for Tenants of Ontario, said, "We want to applaud the undertaking ... to establish a new human rights legal support centre that would provide legal assistance to claimants at each stage of the new process, regardless of level of income."

These are demonstrations that the new system we seek to bring forward is one that is designed, in a timely way, to affect the views that people—

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Thank you. New question.

## IMMIGRANTS' SKILLS

**Mr. Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre):** My question is for the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration. As you're aware, Ottawa is the second most popular destination for newcomers, after the GTA. For those of you who don't know, that means Greater Toronto Area—I have a sense of humour. On average, over 6,000 newcomers come to Ottawa each year, making the national capital a true immigration gateway.

Last week, when you were at Algonquin College in Ottawa, you made what I thought was a very important announcement: a bold step and one that's been lacking for many, many decades in helping internationally trained health professionals to work in their particular field a lot sooner. Would you elaborate today on what this means for them, as well as for others in that situation in Ontario?

**Hon. Mike Colle (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration):** I'd like to thank the member from Ottawa Centre for his question. He's so right: Next to the GTA, Ottawa is the next major gateway for newcomers and immigrants. Ottawa is one of the designated immigrant gateways where we will encourage immigrants to go, because there are many opportunities there in the high-tech centre, the medical centre.

The new programs we announced in Ottawa will allow for seven new opportunities and bridge training for our foreign-trained professionals. That's a total of \$3.8 million in areas like respiratory therapy, anesthesiology assistant and cardiac diagnostics. All these areas are in great demand. The foreign-trained professionals, working in partnership with Algonquin College, will give these highly skilled people an opportunity to serve the people in Ottawa.

**Mr. Patten:** I know that the foreign-trained or internationally trained students who were there were really excited about this opportunity. I can see that it will be a



lot smoother for them to accomplish being practitioners. I want to thank you for that.

But I consistently hear that there are more things that need to be done to encourage employers, in particular, to consider the benefits of hiring internationally trained individuals who bring a wealth of global experience and expertise to cities like Ottawa. What is our government doing in the Ottawa area to encourage businesses to hire newcomers and give them the opportunity to contribute fully as well?

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** In fact, one of the graduates of Algonquin in September will start a residency program at Mount Sinai Hospital. That's what Algonquin did for that young man and his family.

In terms of employment partnerships, for the first time the provincial government is establishing an immigrant employment network in Ottawa. That's done in partnership with the United Way of Ottawa and also with the Ottawa Board of Trade. Those are two partners that are bringing on 45 major employers in Ottawa, which are essentially going to give opportunities to newcomers in internships and mentorship. What this really means is that we have to give newcomers an opportunity at a job. We can talk about diversity and inclusion, but we are encouraging employers to give them a chance to show the qualifications they have and what they contribute to the company and the economy. Ottawa is now leading the way with this new partnership.

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#### SCHOOL BOARDS

**Mr. Frank Klees (Oak Ridges):** To the Minister of Education: I'm asking this question on behalf of school boards across the province. Announcements regarding grants for school boards have always come in the month of April. It is now almost June and school boards in this province still don't know what those grants will be. When will you be announcing the grants for school boards so they can do their appropriate planning? They've been asking you. The answer that you keep giving and that the former minister gave is, "Soon." What does "soon" mean to you?

**Hon. Sandra Pupatello (Minister of Education, minister responsible for women's issues):** For about the last three years the grants have always been released in terms of information at the end of May. The regulations that are attached to the grants have been delivered some time around the middle of July. I'm hoping to stay right around that timeframe. As a new minister, I can tell you that I have taken some extra time. As you know, your formula, which you created, allowed boards tremendous difficulties because there were a number of flaws in this formula. I hope boards will be pleased to see that we're taking our time with the release of these grants.

**Mr. Klees:** That was the very point of my question, Minister. The fact is that those grants, under the former government, used to be announced in April. Under your government, it continues to slip. You have missed the May announcement. It's very difficult for boards across

this province to meet their obligations if your ministry isn't doing its job in telling them how much money they have to work with. When can you give us a date when those grants will be announced by you to the school boards?

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** I think it's fair to compare our government to your government when it comes to education. You may well have had your grants released in a different month, and what that allowed boards was perhaps an extra month or so to figure out where they had to cut their spending, because that's what you were about.

What we have done, year after year, is targeted increases for these boards to improve the school system. We have focused on lowering the drop-out rate, increasing the test results in literacy and numeracy, and bringing down primary class size. When we come forward with grants, the school boards actually say, "This is good news." But they didn't say that with your government. So if they would allow me a couple of more weeks to fix what you so seriously broke, I think it's reasonable, because I believe that the boards, from the day we became the government, have been very pleased with our delivery of education, far superior than yours, my friend.

#### COURT REPORTERS

**Mr. Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre):** To the Acting Premier: Sir, across Ontario, trials are being jeopardized because overworked and under-resourced court employees are forced to use outdated recording equipment. Mr. Justice Ron Thomas has called it a "serious cancer" in the justice system, and compared the equipment your government provides these court workers to something out of the Flintstones. When is your government going to take action in this regard?

**Hon. George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** Obviously the Ministry of the Attorney General takes the issue of transcripts very seriously. They're working on a pilot at this point that was initiated on advanced digital recording systems. In addition to ongoing training programs, the ministry has undertaken a major refresher training initiative for all 2,000 court staff. I believe that these initiatives, in addition to ones the Attorney General would like to personally tell you about—if you want to repose that question at a time soon—would indicate to all that we recognize that the appropriate function of our courts is an essential element and that the technology associated with that is essential as well. That's why we've taken these steps. We'll look forward to the opportunity to engage in further dialogue by way of supplementary.

**Mr. Kormos:** Before his election as a member of government, the Attorney General was oh, so eloquent about the impact of funding cuts to our justice system, especially around court reporting.

**Hon. David Ramsay (Minister of Natural Resources, minister responsible for aboriginal affairs):** Why don't you ask him directly?



**Mr. Kormos:** If the Attorney General were here, Mr. Ramsay, I would ask him.

Mr. Bryant said, "Surely the administration of justice cannot be compromised in the name of financial incentives," yet on your government's watch, the problems have been getting worse and worse: outdated equipment, tape; tape recording equipment that doesn't work; understaffing, which means there aren't adequate numbers of people who are monitoring the taping to provide the transcripts; and charges being dismissed as a result of that, including the prospect of very serious criminal charges and convictions being overturned under your government's watch, using equipment referred to as Flintstonian.

How many cases are going to have to be dismissed, how many charges and convictions thrown out, before you make the investment that's needed in our criminal justice system?

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** Like I said before, we all recognize the necessity of the appropriate function of our court system and the technologies associated with it. The ministry will be moving forward this summer with an RFP related to a pilot project. And this fall, training for all 2,000 individuals—court staff, including court reporters—will be initiated. It's our suggestion that these opportunities will provide us with a good chance to move forward and to address the concerns the honourable member has raised. Of course, there would be further opportunity on the part of the Attorney General to expand on these initiatives so as to further demonstrate the commitment that our government has for the appropriate function of our courts.

#### EMPLOYMENT SUPPORTS

**Mr. Jim Brownell (Stormont-Dundas-Charlottenburgh):** My question is to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. Minister, the community of Chesterville in my riding of Stormont-Dundas-Charlottenburgh was shocked when it recently learned that its Nestlé plant was closing. This plant in Chester-ville was an institution and had been a major community employer for as long as anyone can remember. When this closure was first announced, there was great concern about how the community would adjust to such a dramatic change.

I'm pleased to inform this Legislature that the people of Chesterville are adjusting and displaying their trade-mark tenacity to make their community better. While some of the former Nestlé employees have found new work and others have chosen early retirement, there are still more than 200 souls transitioning into their new reality. As was done in Cornwall for the Domtar employees, this government is providing funding for an action centre to assist these individuals. Minister, could you tell us how this action centre will assist the former Nestlé employees?

**Hon. Christopher Bentley (Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities):** I'd like to thank the member

for the question. I know he's been working very hard on behalf of his constituents, the workers in that particular facility.

What happens initially is that the adjustment advisory program kicks in. As a result of the advocacy by the honourable member some time ago, as soon as we hear about a layoff or a closure or a labour adjustment, we contact the company, the union and the community the same day. That's as a result of his advocacy. That's the new approach. That was done in this case on the same day. The action centre was set up just weeks later, with the co-operation of all. It's jointly funded by the province, the federal government and the company. That centre provides job assistance information, information on how to obtain training, information on counselling and links with other programs in the community, such as the Job Connect program in Cornwall, which just received \$2 million to provide funding for over 2,600 individuals. It's that type of linkage, the immediate on-the-ground assistance, that will really provide real assistance to the workers—

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Thank you. Supplementary.

**Mr. Brownell:** Thank you, Minister. It's always my pleasure to advocate on behalf of the constituents of my riding. I'm grateful there is a committed, forward-thinking government there for me to work with in regard to delivering for the good people of my riding of Stormont-Dundas-Charlottenburgh.

Minister, as you are aware, there are challenging times in some sectors in eastern Ontario. The town of Chesterville is currently in the midst of a transition. I know that this government is responding to the needs of the people of eastern Ontario through this transition period with support and assistance. Could you describe for us some of our government's initiatives in assisting the businesses and people of eastern Ontario?

**Hon. Mr. Bentley:** I'd refer this to the Minister of Economic Development and Trade.

**Hon. Joseph Cordiano (Minister of Economic Development and Trade):** Indeed, this member has been a tireless champion on behalf of his community.

I want to point out that our ministry also provides business advisory services for eastern Ontario. There are three offices, staffed by six senior business advisers and led by a regional manager. They work with small and medium-sized firms that are growth-oriented. There has been much success in that regard.

In addition to that, there is something called the Ontario East Economic Development Commission. That was created in 1988, under a previous Liberal government headed by Premier Peterson. It was formed with the purpose of doing joint marketing. As well, recently it has been exploring opportunities to attract new investment in the auto parts sector, and we're having some success with that. That's as a result of the great work that we've done with respect to the auto strategy in this province, and it is moving forward.



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## DRUG LEGISLATION

**Mr. John O'Toole (Durham):** My question is to the Minister of Health. As you might know, the hearings on Bill 102 are in process in the committee as we speak. I'm hearing one recurring theme, from the pharmacists as well as patient groups as well as the manufacturers of pharmaceuticals that are used in Ontario, and that theme is that there's much in this bill that is not actually in the bill that we're discussing. It's clear that it's going to be in regulation and policy changes. As a matter of fact, a couple of the presenters have led me to assume that you've got some secret deals going on outside of the committee process, and this is completely unfair. Minister, I'm putting to you that—

### *Interjections.*

**Mr. O'Toole:** You've time-allocated this bill. I'm asking you today to release the policies and the regulations for debate so that the committee can do the work that they're charged with in this Legislature, as opposed to conducting these hearings outside of the committee with you—

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** The question has been asked.

**Hon. George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** Sometimes you consult and they say you shouldn't, and sometimes you consult and they say that you should. The reality is that we are in a frame of mind towards constant consultation. What that has meant, in the six weeks since we presented our bill and our package overall—which is legislative and includes regulation and, of course, policy changes—is that we continue to be in dialogue with lots and lots of groups. Accordingly, the Legislature will have the opportunity, at third reading, to consider whether they wish to support a bill that will have the opportunity for amendment at committee next week.

I can assure the honourable member that in a variety of areas, like all bills that I've had the privilege of having stand in my name, we will bring to committee a variety of amendments, opposition parties will as well, and the final package will be voted on as third reading of Bill 102. I can assure the honourable member that I will continue to meet with many groups, between now and then and after, with a view to enhancing the quality of the drug system in the province of Ontario.

## VISITORS

**Ms. Andrea Horwath (Hamilton East):** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I just wanted to make note that we have some distinguished guests from Hamilton today in the gallery: the chair of our police services board, Bernie Morelli, who is now also the chair of the Ontario Association of Police Services Boards, and our chief of police, Brian Mullan.

**Mr. John O'Toole (Durham):** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: also a distinguished guest, Doug Moffatt,

who is the chair of the police services board and a former member of the Ontario Legislature some years ago. Welcome, Doug Moffatt.

## PETITIONS

### EDUCATION FUNDING

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman (Oxford):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly:

"Whereas the Ontario government already fully funds 93% of faith-based schools in Ontario, but the remaining 7% receive no funding, solely because they are not Catholic;

"Whereas the United Nations Human Rights Committee ruled in 1999 and again in 2005 that this arrangement is discriminatory and violates basic international human rights law that Ontario formally agreed to uphold;

"Whereas all three parties represented in the Legislature support Catholic separate school funding, as guaranteed by the Constitution of Canada, so that the only fair and viable solution to the discrimination is to extend funding to the small religious minorities that are currently excluded;

"Whereas the Supreme Court of Canada has ruled that Ontario has the constitutional power to provide funding to non-Catholic faith-based schools;

"Whereas Ontario is the only western democracy that fully funds faith-based schools of one religion to the total exclusion of all other religions, while all other provinces except the Atlantic provinces fund faith-based schools and have thriving public school systems;

"Whereas the cultural survival of the affected minority groups is at stake;

"Whereas faith-based schools produce responsible and productive citizens; and

"Whereas the Multi-Faith Coalition for Equal Funding of Religious Schools in December 2004 submitted to the Minister of Education a detailed proposal for the funding of non-Catholic faith-based schools in a manner that is fair and accountable and protects and enhances the public interest;

"We call on the Ontario Legislature to pass legislation to provide equitable funding in respect of all faith-based schools in Ontario without religious discrimination and without any reduction in funding for public education, with accountability requirements and standards in place to ensure that the public interest is safeguarded."

I affix my signature as I agree with the petition.

## TRADE DEVELOPMENT

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn (Oakville):** "Whereas more than 260,000 Ontarians make their living and support their families through their careers in the auto industry in Ontario, which has become the pre-eminent manufacturer of motor vehicles in North America; and

"Whereas Canada imports more than 130,000 vehicles annually from the Republic of Korea, which imports virtually no vehicles or parts from Canada and does none of its manufacturing or assembly in Ontario or in any other Canadian jurisdiction, even though Canadian auto workers make the best-quality, most cost-effective vehicles in the world; and

"Whereas the government of Canada aims for a free trade agreement that would include the Republic of Korea in 2006, does not address the structural trade imbalance in the auto sector, and includes no measures to require Korea to reduce tariff and non-tariff barriers to Canadian-made vehicles, auto parts and other value-added services or components;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the government of Ontario insist that the government of Canada either cease free trade discussions with the Republic of Korea or make any proposed agreement contingent on fair and equal access by each country to the other's domestic markets in manufactured products such as motor vehicles and in value-added services, and ensure that Korea commits to manufacturing vehicles in Canada if Korea proposes to continue to sell vehicles in Canada."

I agree with this petition and will sign it.

#### DRUG LEGISLATION

**Mr. Gerry Martiniuk (Cambridge):** I have a petition signed by hundreds of Cambridge residents, provided to me by Preston Medical Pharmacy and Medic Pharmacy. It's directed to the Parliament of Ontario.

"Whereas the McGuinty government's Bill 102 introduces a significant degree of uncertainty for pharmacists and patients across Ontario; and

"Whereas the McGuinty government's Bill 102 could result in reduced services to patients resulting from fewer hours of pharmacy operations, fewer pharmacies stocking expensive drugs, unfair capping of claim maximums, elimination of rebates and the permanent closing of some pharmacies; and

"Whereas the changes to the dispensing fees do not accurately reflect the true costs of safely dispensing drugs; and

"Whereas there is no protection afforded by Bill 102 to prevent future increases in drug prices where pharmacies are limited to the acquisition cost;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the McGuinty government withdraw or amend Bill 102 to ensure fairness to patients and pharmacies."

As I agree with this petition, I sign my name thereto.

#### TRADE DEVELOPMENT

**Mr. Dave Levac (Brant):** This was dropped off to me by members of the CAW with concerns about fair auto trade with South Korea:

"Petition to the Ontario Legislative Assembly:

"Whereas more than 260,000 Ontarians make their living and support their families through their careers in the auto industry in Ontario, which has become the pre-eminent manufacturer of motor vehicles in North America; and

"Whereas Canada imports more than 130,000 vehicles annually from the Republic of Korea, which imports virtually no vehicles or parts from Canada and does none of its manufacturing or assembly in Ontario or in any other Canadian jurisdiction, even though Canadian auto workers make the best-quality, most cost-effective vehicles in the world; and

"Whereas the government of Canada aims for a free trade agreement that would include the Republic of Korea in 2006, does not address the structural trade imbalance in the auto sector, and includes no measures to require Korea to reduce tariff and non-tariff barriers to Canadian-made vehicles, auto parts and other value-added services or components;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the government of Ontario insist that the government of Canada either cease free trade discussions with the Republic of Korea or make any proposed agreement contingent on fair and equal access by each country to the other's domestic markets in manufactured products such as motor vehicles and in value-added services, and ensure that Korea commits to manufacturing vehicles in Canada if Korea proposes to continue to sell vehicles in Canada."

I sign my name to this petition and hand it over to Clarence, our page.

1530

#### LONG-TERM CARE

**Mrs. Christine Elliott (Whitby-Ajax):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario from Sunnycrest Nursing Homes, Ltd.

"We, the undersigned, who are members of family councils, residents' councils and/or supporters of long-term care in Ontario, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to increase operating funding to long-term-care homes by \$306.6 million, which will allow the hiring of more staff to provide an additional 20 minutes of care per resident per day over the next two years (2006 and 2007)."

I'm pleased to affix my signature in support thereof.

#### TRADE DEVELOPMENT

**Mr. Jeff Leal (Peterborough):** I have a petition today from a group of hard-working citizens involved in the CAW union regarding fair auto trade with South Korea.

"Whereas more than 260,000 Ontarians make their living, and support their families, through their careers in the auto industry in Ontario, which has become the pre-



eminent manufacturer of motor vehicles in North America; and

“Whereas Canada imports more than 130,000 vehicles annually from the Republic of Korea, which imports virtually no vehicles or parts from Canada, and does none of its manufacturing or assembly in Ontario or in any other jurisdiction, even though Canadian auto workers make the best-quality, most cost-effective vehicles in the world; and

“Whereas the government of Canada aims for a free trade agreement that would include the Republic of Korea in 2006, does not address the structural trade imbalance in the auto sector, and includes no measures to require Korea to reduce tariff and non-tariff barriers to Canadian-made vehicles, auto parts and other value-added services or components;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“That the government of Ontario insist that the government of Canada either cease free trade discussion was the Republic of Korea or make any proposed agreement contingent on fair and equal access by each country to the other’s domestic markets and manufactured products, such as motor vehicles and in value-added services, and ensure that Korea commits to manufacturing vehicles in Canada if Korea proposes to continue to sell vehicles in Canada.”

I agree with this petition and will put my signature on it.

#### EDUCATION FUNDING

**Mr. Frank Klees (Oak Ridges):** I have a petition to the Ontario Legislature to end discrimination. I’m going to put my reading glasses on so that I can read it.

“Whereas the Ontario government already fully funds 93% of faith-based schools in Ontario, but the remaining 7% receive no funding, solely because they are not Catholic;

“Whereas the United Nations Human Rights Committee ruled in 1999 and again in 2005 that this arrangement is discriminatory and violates basic international human rights law that Ontario formally agreed to uphold;

“Whereas all three parties represented in the Legislature support Catholic separate school funding, as guaranteed by the Constitution of Canada, so that the only fair and viable solution to the discrimination is to extend funding to the small religious minorities that are currently excluded;

“Whereas the Supreme Court of Canada has ruled that Ontario has the constitutional power to provide funding to non-Catholic faith-based schools;

“Whereas Ontario is the only western democracy that fully funds faith-based schools of one religion to the total exclusion of all other religions, while all other provinces except the Atlantic provinces fund faith-based schools and have thriving public school systems;

“Whereas the cultural survival of the affected minority groups is at stake;

“Whereas faith-based schools produce responsible and productive citizens; and

“Whereas the Multi-Faith Coalition for Equal Funding of Religious Schools in December 2004 submitted to the Minister of Education a detailed proposal for the funding of non-Catholic faith-based schools in a manner that is fair and accountable and protects and enhances the public interest;

“We call on the Ontario Legislature to pass legislation to provide equitable funding in respect of all faith-based schools in Ontario without religious discrimination and without any reduction in funding for public education, with accountability requirements and standards in place to ensure that the public interest is safeguarded.”

I will add my signature, because I fully support the request, and hand it to page Clarence.

#### IMMIGRANTS’ SKILLS

**Mr. Tony Ruprecht (Davenport):** This petition is about internationally trained professionals. It’s addressed to the Parliament of Ontario and reads as follows:

“Whereas the Ontario government recognizes the need to match internationally trained persons with professional work experience in their related fields; and

“Whereas the Ontario government is dedicated to making sure new Ontarians achieve long-term success in developing and sustaining their career goals; and

“Whereas the creation of 24 new bridge programs, bringing the total amount to 60 over the next three years, will help to make these goals a reality; and

“Whereas this funding of \$14 million over the next three years will assist more than 3,000 internationally trained persons to increase their language skills, training and exam preparation;

“We, the undersigned, respectfully petition the Parliament of Ontario as follows:

“That all members of the House support the new funding for further bridge training programs in order to create a more inclusive and successful environment for newcomers to the province.

Since I agree, I am delighted to sign this petition.

#### CAFETERIA FOOD GUIDELINES

**Mr. Norm Miller (Parry Sound–Muskoka):** I have a petition from students and teachers of Bracebridge and Muskoka Lakes Secondary School to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas childhood obesity rates have tripled over the past two decades in Canada; and

“Whereas the annual amount of money the health care system uses to mend preventable obesity-related illnesses is \$1.6 billion; and

“Whereas the Ontario food premises regulation only provides safety policies that must be followed by the Ontario school boards’ cafeterias, but no defined regulations regarding the nutrition standard of the food being served at the cafeterias; and

"Whereas there is a need to encourage nutritious standards in high school cafeterias that support Canada's Guidelines for Healthy Eating; and

"Whereas the private member's bill proposed by Nupur Dogra under Making the Grade and her fellow students at Iroquois Ridge High School will require all Ontario school boards' cafeterias to adopt and abide [by] healthier eating standards (similar to Canada's Guidelines for Healthy Eating) that will govern the food choices;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to pass the private member's bill that will amend the Ontario school boards' cafeteria food guidelines to follow healthier food standards in all Ontario high school cafeterias."

I support this petition and give it to page Mitchell.

### LONG-TERM CARE

**Mr. Jim Brownell (Stormont-Dundas-Charlottenburgh):** I have a petition from Parisien Manor in the city of Cornwall.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas long-term-care funding levels are too low to enable homes to provide the care and services our aging seniors and parents who are residents of long-term-care homes need, with the respect and dignity that they deserve; and

"Whereas, even with recent funding increases and a dedicated staff who do more than their best, there is still not enough time available to provide the care residents need. For example, 10 minutes, and sometimes less, is simply not enough time to assist a resident to get up, dressed, to the bathroom and then to the dining room for breakfast; and

"Whereas those unacceptable care and service levels are now at risk and declining;

"We, the undersigned, who are members of family councils, residents' councils and/or supporters of long-term care in Ontario, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to increase operating funding to long-term-care homes by \$306.6 million, which will allow the hiring of more staff to provide an additional 20 minutes of care per resident per day over the next two years (2006 and 2007)."

I send this with Hartford.

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### BORDER SECURITY

**Hon. James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, Government House Leader):** I seek unanimous consent to move a motion without notice respecting the proposed US passport requirement and for each party to be allowed to speak to the motion for up to five minutes, following which the

Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of the motion without further debate or amendment; and

Further, to stipulate that today's debate on Bill 107 be considered one full sessional day.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Mr. Bradley seeks unanimous consent of the House to move a motion without notice respecting the proposed US passport requirement and for each party to be allowed to speak to the motion for up to five minutes, following which the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of the motion without further debate or amendment and, further, to stipulate that today's debate on Bill 107 be considered to be one full sessional day.

Is there consent in the House for the government House leader to move that motion? Agreed.

I recognize the government House leader.

1540

**Hon. Mr. Bradley:** I presume you want me to read the motion first, Mr. Speaker, and I will do that. The motion is as follows:

That the Legislative Assembly of Ontario recognizes that more secure documentation is desirable on the Canada-United States border.

That the Legislative Assembly of Ontario recognizes that the proposed requirement that all Canadian and US citizens show a passport or other single-purpose travel document to be allowed to enter or re-enter the United States would cause significant and unnecessary damage to tourism and trade in both countries.

That the Legislative Assembly of Ontario supports the position taken by the government of Ontario on October 27, 2005, in its submission to the US Department of Homeland Security commenting on the passport issue.

That the Legislative Assembly of Ontario specifically endorses the approach advocated in that October 27, 2005, document, including:

—the establishment of a binational working group to identify and develop proposals for alternative forms of secure documentation, such as a new, more secure driver's licence or other form of documentation;

—travellers aged 16 or under who are accompanied by a properly documented adult should be permitted to enter and re-enter the United States using proof of citizenship;

—any proposals for new ID requirements for entering or re-entering the United States be piloted on a trial basis before being fully implemented; and

—the implementation of any changes in border-crossing documentation be delayed to provide sufficient phase-in time to minimize disruptions.

That the Legislative Assembly of Ontario supports tourism and commerce in Ontario, and supports the province of Ontario working with other North American jurisdictions at the Gimli meeting of provincial Premiers and state Governors to find border-crossing alternatives that would not needlessly harm economic prosperity in Canada or the United States.

**The Acting Speaker:** Mr. Bradley has moved: "That the Legislative Assembly of Ontario recognizes that more



secure documentation is desirable on the Canada-United States border.

"That the Legislative Assembly of Ontario recognizes that the proposed requirement that all Canadian and US citizens show a passport"—

**Mr. Dave Levac (Brant):** Dispense.

**The Acting Speaker:** Dispense?

**Mr. Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre):** No.

**The Acting Speaker:** I'll continue to read.

—"or other single-purpose travel document to be allowed to enter or re-enter the United States would cause significant and unnecessary damage to tourism and trade in both countries.

"That the Legislative Assembly of Ontario supports the position taken by the government of Ontario on October 27, 2005, in its submission to the US Department of Homeland Security commenting on the passport issue.

"That the Legislative Assembly of Ontario specifically endorses the approach advocated in that October 27, 2005, document, including:

"—the establishment of a binational working group to identify and develop proposals for alternative forms of secure documentation, such as a new, more secure driver's licence or other form of documentation;

"—travellers aged 16 or under who are accompanied by a properly documented adult should be permitted to enter and re-enter the United States using proof of citizenship;

"—any proposals for new ID requirements for entering or re-entering the United States be piloted on a trial basis before being fully implemented; and

"—the implementation of any changes in border-crossing documentation be delayed to provide sufficient phase-in time to minimize disruptions.

"That the Legislative Assembly of Ontario supports tourism and commerce in Ontario, and supports the province of Ontario working with other North American jurisdictions at the Gimli meeting of provincial Premiers and state Governors to find border-crossing alternatives that would not needlessly harm economic prosperity in Canada or the United States."

I recognize the government House leader and Minister of Tourism to lead off.

**Hon. Mr. Bradley:** Thank you very much for the opportunity to speak to this motion of the House, which is taking place before the meeting at Gimli, Manitoba, and which deals with what I consider to be, and I think many people consider to be, the paramount issue, related to tourism and, to a large extent, trade between Canada and the United States.

In order for us to protect Ontario's tourism and trade from the proposal to require a passport to enter or re-enter the United States, we have to work with our natural allies in the United States Congress and with state governors. That is what the province of Ontario has been doing up to this point in time. We need to alert them to our own economic well-being and their economic well-being, and encourage them to press for mutually bene-

ficial changes to the passport proposal. That is why the Gimli meeting represents an important opportunity, and the Premier will be raising this issue and discussing this issue at Gimli.

The presence of the United States Governors gives us a chance to share information, develop strategies and continue to encourage American voices in favour of change.

Our position is as follows in Ontario, and we have stated this position in an official submission to the Department of Homeland Security:

"The establishment of a bi-national working group to identify and develop proposals for alternative forms of secure documentation, such as a new, more secure driver licence or other form of documentation.

"Travellers aged 16 or under who are accompanied by a properly documented adult should be permitted to enter and re-enter the United States using proof of citizenship alone.

"Any proposals for ID requirements for entering or re-entering the United States be piloted on a trial basis before being fully implemented.

"The implementation of any changes in border crossing documentation be delayed to provide sufficient phase-in time to minimize disruptions."

One of the things we are concerned about, as this debate proceeds, is not to fall into the trap of settling for any single-purpose travel document. Call it a passport, a pass card or a Nexus card, it all means the same thing. That requirement would cost millions of informal visitors coming across our borders.

I'd like to put this in context. The Ontario government put forward its position last October 27 in a submission to the Department of Homeland Security when the period for public comment on the passport was still on. Thirteen months ago, the Premier discussed this matter with Homeland Security Chief Michael Chertoff and with several US governors.

On behalf of the government, I have written several opinion pieces on the passport issue, the first of which was published in a half-dozen papers in Canada and in the US, where it sought to sound the alarm about the unnecessary economic damage a passport requirement would cause. The second, also published in a half-dozen North American newspapers, sought to dispel the pessimism expressed by some who believed the battle had already been lost. I pointed out that Ontario had many powerful and like-minded allies in the United States Congress.

Subsequently, we have seen the US Senate adopt a series of amendments that would substantially change the law in a way that Ontario desires.

Recently I've spoken to Governor Robert Taft of Ohio, Vermont Senator Patrick Leahy, and today Congresswoman Louise Slaughter and others to discuss concerns and strategies, and later today with the Governor of Virginia.

Later this week in Gimli, the Premier will have an opportunity to push the debate forward in consultation



with fellow Premiers and a number of US Governors, all of whom have the same interests. I remain optimistic that the border can be made more secure without causing unnecessary damage to tourism and trade.

This resolution indicates there's support by all members of the House, by all parties in this House, for the position that the province of Ontario has taken in this matter. I know there has been some initial criticism that Ontario was aggressive in pursuing this issue, that perhaps Ontario wasn't being as compromising as some people would like us to have been. But I think we recognize how important this issue is, that half measures are not good enough in this case, that the implications are so great for our economy, in both the United States and Canada, that to accept any major compromise would not be in the interest of either Canada or the United States.

This is not a Canada-US fight. Some have characterized our government as being anti-US in this. This is anything but a Canada-US fight. This is a fight between those of us, particularly along the border, who understand the importance of the economic impact on our jurisdictions, and those in the more interior states or perhaps farther away from the border in both countries who do not see the immediate impact of this for our economies on both sides.

Nor is this partisan. In the United States, Republicans and Democrats, in the Senate and the House, in Legislatures and at the municipal level, have come together to advocate what we are advocating in this resolution this afternoon.

I look forward to the kind support of the members of the opposition for the position the government has taken in this regard. I hope we will prevail, and I'm confident we will as the future continues.

1550

**Mr. John Tory (Leader of the Opposition):** I was very pleased that we were able to play a part, together with the New Democratic Party and the government, to bring this resolution before the House today. I was pleased as well to have the opportunity last week to go to Washington. I went to listen, I went to learn and I went, frankly, to help to the extent that one can, to advance Ontario's case, which is also Canada's case. I think you learn a lot by meeting with people. In my case, I met with everyone from elected officials to staffers on the Hill in Washington to staffers at the Department of Homeland Security and officials of our own embassy. I just thought, in the brief time available to us today, that I would talk about the lessons that came from that trip for me which caused me to suggest that we have this all-party resolution to help the government and to help all of us to advance Ontario's and Canada's case.

The first lesson: We have to work together. This is Canada's problem. It is Ontario's problem. It's Toronto's problem. It's Oakville's problem. It's Brantford's problem. It's everybody's problem. And for that matter, it's the problem of a lot of cities south of the border, as the government House leader said. So it is something that has to be done, where all parties work together and all

governments work together. While I agree with the government House leader that it's not a partisan issue, it's not even a Canada-US dispute, really; it is something where I think we have to be very careful, even inside our own country, to make sure that we are seen as working together, that we're seen as being on the same page and that we don't give the people south of the border a reason to think otherwise.

There are two reasons why I think we have to work together, both of which I saw in Washington. The first is that there are many legislators in the United States to cover. There are far more legislators there on the national basis than there are here, and many of them are not from the border states, so they have a vague understanding of what this issue is. They certainly have a keen understanding of the importance of the security issue in the United States. So in the absence of our being able to go to explain to them that there are other issues that arise out of this, we're not going to be able to protect our own interests—and theirs, for that matter. Our embassy has done a wonderful job in Washington of preparing information that outlines to some of these people how much of an interest they have in making sure that the Canada-US—and even the Ontario-individual state—commercial relationship is maintained and strengthened; and the same with tourism. The second reason is that they're watching very carefully to see what our position is, how we conduct ourselves on this side of the border. They're looking for any opportunity to see that Canadians are in some way divided on this.

The second lesson I learned: Provided you take into account the overriding concern that exists in the United States about security, there is a great deal of sympathy and common interest among the legislators, staffers and others whom I met on the other side of the border. They recognize—and we're helping them, with some of this good work being done by the embassy and I'm sure by the government of Ontario and the government of Canada—that we all have a lot at stake, including them, commercially, tourism-wise and otherwise.

The third lesson is what I call the good-news and bad-news lesson. Starting with the bad news—I always like to do that just to get it out of the way—they're not very far advanced at all in identifying what the alternative documentation is or the technology that might be employed for alternative documentation to a passport. The good news is, they're not very far advanced, so that it gives us a real opportunity to put forward suggestions such as the one mentioned by the Minister of Tourism in terms of a driver's licence and that kind of thing.

I think it also puts a challenge in front of us, though—and this would be lesson four from my trip to Washington—namely, that we have to be proactive about this. We shouldn't just be relying on the binational process, where, frankly, the wheels are grinding slowly, as they often do. I think we should be doing a lot of work. There's a vacuum waiting to be filled, and maybe some of the work we could do with respect to our driver's licence—and I know we're doing some work with a



couple of US states—if we move that forward quickly, there might be an opportunity for our idea to become the idea that is adopted, and that would be good, one assumes, for everybody.

Lesson number five: Tell our story over and over again. When you tell the story to them about the jobs in their states that are related to Ontario companies and Ontario businesses, their eyes light up. For example, we were with a congressman from Illinois, and he pointed out that the magnesium part that goes inside the BlackBerry is made in his district, then shipped across the border to RIM, then shipped back to the people who buy it. It's a perfect example of the kind of thing that's moving back and forth, aside from tourists. This is a commercial example. We've got to go and tell that story over and over again.

I think the challenge is to come together with each other here, to come together with all the other governments in Canada. I would issue a challenge to all of us, but particularly to the government: Why not put together some delegations of all-party MPPs to go to Washington and have visits with counterparts there to talk about this? Why not appear with the federal government and Ontario together to advance our position? I think there's a lot at stake here. It's one of those issues. It's why I suggested this resolution, where we have to work together, have a common front, a common approach to this. Let's do it together, and as the minister said, let's prevail on this, which I'm sure we will.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr. Kormos:** On behalf of New Democrats, I'm pleased to indicate our support for this resolution. We are pleased there was a process whereby there was some common ground developed between the three parties here at Queen's Park such that this motion could, as it will, receive unanimous support here in this Legislative Assembly.

When speaking on behalf of the New Democrats, I want to indicate that every one of us—and every one of us here in this chamber, regardless of where we are in the province of Ontario—has sensitivity to that interaction, that interplay, that trade, that commerce, that activity in terms of New York state, Pennsylvania, over Michigan way etc. and the province of Ontario. Whether you're Gilles Bisson up in Timmins—James Bay hosting American visitors, be it in the summertime or in the wintertime with winter activities; whether you're here in the city of Toronto; whether you're down from Niagara like my colleague Tim Hudak from Erie—Lincoln or myself, we as members representing border communities and border areas are incredibly sensitive to the dependency—and especially small business, small mom-and-pop operations.

Let's be very, very candid. It's been tough times in the tourism industry in Ontario for more than a couple of years now—the advent of SARS, of course, an incredible crisis that did huge, huge damage to tourism here in the province, not just from New York state, Pennsylvania, Ohio and so on, but internationally. Again, as we've had

occasion to note over the last few days, in various commentaries, the rising Canadian dollar: We're no longer the bargain basement destination for Americans; that's the reality. There's the cost of gasoline.

And now, with the additional hurdle, the need advanced by the Americans for passport-type identification to travel into the United States, whether you're an American or a Canadian, this is, quite frankly, going to create another disincentive.

Mr. Hudak worked at the Peace Bridge. He worked as a customs officer. He was on the economic development commission for Fort Erie, a border community in small-town Ontario that's very much part of a small-town tourism infrastructure. Whether it's tourism specifically or whether it's the trucker, folks who live in Niagara Centre or Erie—Lincoln, in Welland and Wainfleet and Port Colborne and Thorold, who work real hard and for whom in the just-in-time delivery world time is money, the congestion at the border and the enhanced security being proposed could literally be the difference between being able to pay for the payment on that truck and keeping that truck on the road or not.

So this is real nuts-and-bolts sort of stuff. It's not just the luxury of going over to Niagara Falls, New York, on a Sunday afternoon, if you're so inclined. Quite frankly, the Canadian side, in my respectful and humble view, is a far better vista. But this isn't just about the casual visit. It's about the reality of life for a whole lot of hard-working people, either as entrepreneurs, or small business people or not-so-small business people, or the people who work for them. Whether we like it or not—Mr. Bradley and I were talking about this; we talk about it often—the casino down in Niagara has become one of the largest single employers in Niagara region, and we and families and working women and men are increasingly dependent upon the jobs there, as we see other jobs in Ferranti-Packard, Atlas Steel, E.G. Marsh down in Port Colborne disappear.

The casino has become an employer of choice for a whole lot of people. When the casino isn't bringing in guests, ideally guests from outside the region because it's far better to have visitors to Ontario invest their surplus monies in the casino than to recycle local monies, but if we don't have those customers, that clientele, we don't have those jobs.

So we in the New Democratic Party look forward to being able to work collaboratively to address this very, very important issue. We see it as something that is significant. We do not wish to, nor will we get drawn up in hysteria about so-called terrorism, but we recognize the need to respond in a pragmatic and realistic way to the realities of this new century, this new millennium.

1600

**The Acting Speaker:** That concludes the time that has been set aside for debate on this matter.

Mr. Bradley has moved:

“That the Legislative Assembly of Ontario recognizes that more secure documentation is desirable on the Canada-United States border.



"That the Legislative Assembly of Ontario recognizes that the proposed requirement that all Canadian and US citizens show a passport or other single-purpose travel document to be allowed to enter or re-enter the United States would cause significant and unnecessary damage to tourism and trade in both countries.

"That the Legislative Assembly of Ontario supports the position taken by the government of Ontario on October 27, 2005, in its submission to the US Department of Homeland Security commenting on the passport issue.

"That the Legislative Assembly of Ontario specifically endorses the approach advocated in that October 27, 2005, document, including:

"—The establishment of a bi-national working group to identify and develop proposals for alternative forms of secure documentation, such as a new, more secure driver licence or other form of documentation.

"—Travellers aged 16 or under who are accompanied by a properly documented adult should be permitted to enter and re-enter the United States using proof of citizenship.

"—Any proposals for new ID requirements for entering or re-entering the United States be piloted on a trial basis before being fully implemented.

"—The implementation of any changes in border crossing documentation be delayed to provide sufficient phase-in time to minimize disruptions.

"That the Legislative Assembly of Ontario supports tourism and commerce in Ontario, and supports the province of Ontario working with other North American jurisdictions at the Gimli meeting of provincial Premiers and state Governors to find border crossing alternatives that would not needlessly harm economic prosperity in Canada or the United States."

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

#### HUMAN RIGHTS CODE AMENDMENT ACT, 2006

#### LOI DE 2006 MODIFIANT LE CODE DES DROITS DE LA PERSONNE

Resuming the debate adjourned on May 8, 2006, on the motion for second reading of Bill 107, An Act to amend the Human Rights Code / Projet de loi 107, Loi modifiant le Code des droits de la personne.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate?

**Mr. Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre):** This is my opportunity on behalf of the New Democratic Party to use the modest hour allowed me for our so-called lead comment on this bill. One, I want to make it clear that New Democrats do not support Bill 107. We do not support the dismantling, the gutting, the abolition, the elimination of the Ontario Human Rights Commission. Let's be very careful: That's very specifically what Bill 107 does.

The direct access proposal—we understand that there are supporters of it; I'm going to talk about that in due course—is the Americanization, the privatization of human rights protection here in the province of Ontario. The utilization of some regrettable underfunding, some historic underfunding and under-resourcing and, more often than not, anecdotal commentaries about delays—the regrettable utilization of that as a justification for so-called direct access is, I say to you, an avoidance of what should be the real debate. That's why we propose that the real debate should be about making what is a very unique, Ontario-designed human rights commission/tribunal model. We should be talking about giving it the tools that it needs to do its job in an even more effective way.

I remember the minister's press conference down in the press gallery's media room earlier this year. There were the flags, the backdrops, the fanfare, the cheerleaders, the hoopla and the pompoms. The minister was very vague, but the alarm bells started going off right away.

You want to reform the Ontario Human Rights Commission? First and foremost and most fundamentally, make the Ontario Human Rights Commissioner an officer of this assembly rather than a political appointee, and make her or him responsible to this chamber rather than to a political boss—in this case, the Attorney General; to wit, the Premier's office. First and foremost. Like the Environmental Commissioner: Notwithstanding that he was perceived by some as a very partisan appointment, I say to you that he has demonstrated himself to be a very effective officer of this assembly over the course of a few years now and has performed his duties in a very non-partisan way. Like the Ombudsman: Oh, I know that when I speak to some government members about the Ombudsman as an example, they may not find that a particularly attractive proposition, but I say to you that the Ombudsman, as an officer of this assembly, has historically and currently demonstrated how important it is that that body, that role, that function be one that has responsibility to the assembly as a whole, rather than to a political boss—the Integrity Commissioner, the Provincial Auditor. If we're serious about reform of the Ontario Human Rights Commission, let's talk first and foremost about the appointment of the commissioner as an officer of the assembly, rather than as a political appointee with direct accountability to his or her political boss.

I was initially concerned when Ms. Hall first participated in these announcements. I thought this is exactly what those who are concerned about responsibility and accountability being to the political boss rather than to the assembly, as an officer of the assembly—I thought that this was exactly an illustration of it. I was pleased to see that, since that initial appearance by Ms. Hall, she has, in my view, made some effort—I'm going to refer to the one in my hand; to me it's very much an effort—to perhaps be more neutral with respect to the proposal. That is evidenced by the letter of May 18 that she sent to all of us. She sent a fact sheet, because clearly she was



aware that the commission had been getting inquiries from a whole pile of people: I'm sure from the media, I'm sure from interested parties, I'm sure from MPPs.

Let's understand what we've got here. Don't forget: Part IV of the act is being repealed and replaced. It's finished. Part IV is being repealed. Section 6 of Bill 107: "Part IV of the act is repealed." Part IV is what, in my view, describes the commission's function in a very specific way—part III in a broad, philosophical way, but part IV in a functional way. What is it that the commission does? What is it that this commission does and is entitled to do and authorized to do and empowered to do that this government wants to abolish the commission? Well, when Ms. Hall distributed the fact sheet—and I'm pleased we got it, because there were any number of numbers floating around and they were all pretty close. But let's take a look, because it's incredibly important. This is data for the year ending March 31, 2006. In the year preceding, commission staff dealt with over 43,000 inquiries by telephone—43,000, not 4,000—1,760 by letter and 760 live, in-person contacts with the office, and 824,887 unique visits to its website—just shy of a million. I don't know what "unique visit" means, but 800,000-plus—824,000 or 825,000—contacts on the website.

In addition, the commission did that broader public role of public education and, during the course of that, according to the data, spoke to, addressed or dealt with an additional 10,428 people. These numbers are pretty impressive. Of these contacts, the result was 2,399 new complaints—2,400—being filed at the commission. That's with the commission. The commission is the intake body.

1610

Let me get right to the nub of it for just a second. Mr. Bryant stands up here, he puffs out the chest, he gets emphatic and he says, "Right now, don't you folks appreciate that people who are appearing in front of the commission don't have a lawyer." Well, nor do victims of criminal offences. This is the point. You see, we have a crown attorney, a public servant, who prosecutes criminal charges not on behalf of the victim as an individual but on behalf of the community, on behalf of society, because crimes are considered an affront not just to the victim but to all of us, to society.

Of course, a victim of an assault—it doesn't happen a whole lot, just because of the way things tend to work—can sue somebody for assault and battery. That's private litigation; that's between the person who is the victim of the assault and the batterer.

I, for one, think it's a good thing that we have a system of public prosecution of criminal charges, and I think you do too. I think that's a good thing. Nobody has to go out and hire a lawyer if they've been the victim of a crime, to prosecute the criminal charge against the offender, against the perpetrator of the crime. That's why the Human Rights Commission functions very much in a similar way. It prosecutes the complaint of discrimination for any one of the enumerated reasons in the first parts of the act, of the code.

So when Mr. Bryant says, "Victims of discrimination don't have their own lawyers," he's quite right. And from time to time, when the matter proceeds, especially when it proceeds into the tribunal stage—I'm sure people from the commission could tell us what instances, because I'm familiar with it, as are most people I work with—victims do hire their own lawyers. But, to be quite fair, in a criminal process, it's not uncommon, increasingly—and people have had to be dragged kicking and screaming into an area where we recognize victims' rights in the criminal context. But from time to time victims of criminal offences hire their own lawyers too, especially to address issues of, let's say, a restitution order or compensation.

In my view, one of the most important—and please, to the people who are going to watch this or read the Hansard and get on the Internet and write me those e-mails, I've got the e-mails; so has Ms. Elliott; so has Ms. Chambers. I find it a little bit disturbing that some of them are as vitriolic. They read: "How dare you oppose this legislation?" Is that the tone of some of the stuff? How dare I? Well, you just watch. It gets better. I think it's a wrong-headed move, that's why. I understand there's a split out there. I understand that there are opposing points of view.

Mr. Bryant or his parliamentary assistant—good grief, neither is here. I'm going to tell you, and Mr. Bradley will know this because he's even older than I am—

**The Acting Speaker:** I would ask the member to refrain from pointing out the absence of another member.

**Mr. Kormos:** Exactly. Thank you kindly.

Mr. Bradley will know that there was a time, because it is considered convention—he being older than I am knows it even better than I do, and he, having served here longer than I have, knows it even better than I do—especially during the lead speeches, that the minister or his or her parliamentary assistant, who is now finally coming in, would extend the courtesy of being present during the debate of the bill that they were supposed to have carriage of. So while I am loath to note somebody's absence, I am disturbed by the failure of some of these folks to understand convention and to fulfill the responsibilities that they're paid so well for.

These are the kinds of letters—here's one expressing strong disappointment in the approach that the NDP has taken to human rights reform in Bill 107, that "Our current human rights system does not work ... in Ontario, nor do the analogous systems work in other jurisdictions across Canada."

Well, that's interesting, because Ontario is somewhat unique, and surely in British Columbia—remember Ms. Sims was here? Do you remember that, Speaker? Of course you do. She came to Ontario to report on what had happened in British Columbia when they dismantled their equivalent commission and created this direct-access model: disaster.

"Most importantly, this should not be a partisan issue, which you seem to be making it." Far be it from me to be partisan.



**Mr. David Zimmer (Willowdale):** Peter, you're calling the kettle black.

**Mr. Kormos:** Mr. Zimmer, you've got to follow these things. You can't just jump in and expect to be right on top of it. This is a letter supporting your position. It's somebody who says they wonder why I'm partisan. I reject that entirely. I'm probably the least partisan person in this chamber. I haven't got a partisan bone in my body.

Look, it's our job. What's the matter with you people? It's our job to analyze and, yes, criticize. It's our job to point out the shortcomings, the failures, and when the failures and shortcomings are oh, so obvious as they are here, it's our job to do it even more aggressively than we would otherwise. If you think I'm partisan, you wait until Mrs. Elliott tears a strip off you, because she's got some things to say about this too. Just watch, Mr. Zimmer. Just listen.

Look what happens when you're repealing part IV of the Human Rights Code. That's the part that permits a person to make a complaint, to file a complaint with the commission when they believe their rights under the act have been violated. More importantly, pursuant to that, that's the part that gives the commission the power to investigate.

A person authorized to investigate a complaint may: "enter any place...", other than a dwelling house, "at any reasonable time, for the purpose of investigating the complaint"; "request the production for inspection and examination of documents or things that are or may be relevant to the investigation"; "remove from a place documents produced in response"—in other words, you can go in there, do your search and then seize the things and use them as documents in the process—"question a person," and, with a search warrant, enter into dwellings. "No person shall hinder, obstruct or interfere with a person in the execution of a warrant or otherwise impede an investigation under this act."

Why would this government want to deny victims of discrimination the investigative procedure provided in part IV that they're repealing? Why, indeed?

This government touts, along with some of their fans, who as often as not tend to be lawyers—look, I've got nothing against lawyers, I suppose. But it's interesting that when you look at the two ends of the spectrum here—and it is pretty polarized, isn't it; it's a pretty polarized debate—it just tends to be Mr. Bryant's lawyer friends who are advocates of so-called direct access.

1620

I don't understand why this government would want to deny a victim of discrimination the investigative powers of a commission investigator, not for the life of me. How are victims of discrimination supposed to go around gathering the evidence? Explain that, parliamentary assistant. They can't. They don't have the resources; they don't have the means. You show me where in the act a victim or his or her agent is going to have the same search and seizure powers as an investigator of the commission does now under existing part IV, sections 32 and 33, huh? Show me, because it's not there.

Look at what the commission does: The commission indicates that it dealt with 2,399 cases last year—I'm doing that off the top of my head. I just read that number. As a matter of fact, it's at the top of the page. Yes, 2,399; 57.1% were settled by the commission or resolved between the parties.

Mediation, without investigation, without any expenditure of public funds pursuing investigation, which is an incredibly important and valuable tool in the process of protecting people against discrimination—34.4% settled through early mediation without investigation. This is what's interesting as well, because Ms. Hall, the commissioner, has given us time frames, because, regrettably, part of the set-up by the Attorney General has been some hyperbole around time frames. Of the 34.4% of those 2,399 cases resolved by mediation, the average time frame was 7.4 months. Should it be faster? Well, sure, it should be faster. But 7.4 months, half a year plus, in the total scheme of things is really not that lengthy a time frame, is it? It doesn't quite fit the anecdotal horror stories that we've heard.

I know some of the people who work at the commission—good people. I know some of the mediators who work there. What it suggests to me is that they're very skilled, committed, professional people who are incredibly devoted to the type of work they're doing. It's not the highest-paying work in the province, that's for sure. If you want big money, get on one of this government's hand-picked electricity boards. That's where the big bucks are, right? If you've got Donna Cansfield on your side, you're rolling in dough.

*Laughter.*

**Mr. Kormos:** Well, think about it. Mr. Leal laughs. He's got kids he's got to send to college and university. He's coping here. Mr. Leal's thinking, "Yes, one of those electricity boards." That's where the bucks are, aren't they, Mr. Leal?

**Mr. Jeff Leal (Peterborough):** Those are hard-working citizens who work on those boards.

**Mr. Kormos:** Mr. Leal is now on Hansard, praising the exorbitant pay and perks of those robber barons on the government's electricity boards. It's amazing how some people can manage to get themselves in Hansard in the most peculiar ways, isn't it, and under the most peculiar circumstances?

Mediation resolved 34%-plus of 2,399 cases. Average time frame: 7.4 months. I'd say that's a pretty darned good result. I attribute that to the leadership and the hard day-to-day work by—under-staffed, under-resourced? You bet your boots.

Another 10% settled at the investigation stage. Don't forget: 34% settled with no investigation commenced. In another 10%, the investigation brought forward information that promoted settlement. Then 12.6% were resolved between the parties. That's vague; I don't know what stage that means or what the circumstances were. Perhaps it means private resolution, without using the services of the commission; I don't know. That's the information we got.



That comes out to 57.1% of cases settled by the commission or resolved between the parties. So almost 60% of all cases were dealt with by the commission, and the government wants to abolish the commission. For the life of me, I don't understand the economies there. I don't understand how eliminating the role of an investigator, with the investigative powers under section 33, is going to make life easier for people seeking redress when they've been the victims of discrimination.

Of the 2,399 new complaints that the commission received last year—a period before March 31, 2006—2,117 were completed at the commission stage. Of 2,399 there were 2,117 dealt with at the commission stage: average time frame, 12.9 months. I'd say that's pretty good, darned good work on the part of a commission that could use more resources and more staff. It's 12.9 months, 13 months, average time frame and you're talking about all but a couple of hundred cases resolved at the commission level. One hundred and forty-three were referred to the tribunal and then add to that 27 where the commission had, in the first instance, apparently suggested it not go to the tribunal stage, but the people then sought a review of that, so 143 plus 27—170 cases out of 2,399 go to the tribunal.

It's noted that over the last few years the commission has received more cases than it has capacity to address, resulting in a backlog of 581 cases. I happen to have a copy of the Askov ruling in my desk. I keep it here because I'm reminded that the Court of Appeal decision in Askov occurred during the last Liberal government, and we still have Askov rulings occurring during this Liberal government. Interesting, isn't it? It was 1987 that the Court of Appeal ruled on Askov, and that was the operative ruling in terms of the province of Ontario.

That's like saying that since we've got this horrible backlog in our criminal courts, "I've got it. Why don't we just fire the crown attorneys." Right? Do you understand what I'm saying? "We've got this backlog in criminal court, and part of the problem is we don't have enough crown attorneys, we don't have enough courtrooms, we don't have enough resources, so this is the plan. Now here's a plan." This is the Liberal perspective. This is the Liberal approach. This is the Liberal attitude. "We've got a backlog of criminal cases and some of them are going to be tossed out because of Askov. That's politically embarrassing in and of itself, because then you get questions from the opposition parties in question period, so why don't we just get rid of the crown attorneys' office and tell people they can have direct access."

You hire a private prosecutor, and if you're really poor, you can maybe get a legal aid certificate, and then you have to search around finding a lawyer who will work for that certificate. I'm sure there are, just as there are in the human rights arena. "Furthermore, we've got a serious backlog of criminal cases"—this is the government's logic—"why don't we just tell people they'll no longer have access to a public police force doing investigations?" That will deal with the backlog. By God, people will have direct access, won't they?

That's what you're doing here with Bill 107. You're eliminating the commission—dare I use the word?—prosecutor. You're eliminating the investigative services. It's like telling victims of Criminal Code offences, "Don't expect to have the police investigate the charge and don't expect the crown attorney to prosecute because you have direct access, friend." This has a good spin to it, doesn't it? "You can avoid the delay and get yourself right in front of a tribunal."

1630

The commission dealt with 2,117 of the 2,400 cases that were presented to it in that fiscal year ending March 31, 2006, and 170 went to the tribunal—143 in the first instance and 27 after the complainant sought a review of the initial decision of the commission.

I've got a hard time explaining to folks down where I come from how this proposal is going to make their life any easier, any better. Even Ms. Cornish—look, I understand the direct-access model. It's a point of view. It's one that I fundamentally disagree with. It's one that New Democrats fundamentally disagree with, when there's such a huge public interest in the prosecution—and I know that's not the right language. Somebody will write me an e-mail about that, and that's okay. But it's in the public interest that these complaints be prosecuted by a public body like the commission.

Let's see, let's understand, what some of the folks are saying about this proposal. I've got a remarkable letter, a remarkable analysis from the office of the ombudsperson at York University, Fiona Crean, ombudsperson and director of human rights, York University. That's the Office of the Ombudsperson and Centre for Human Rights. Again, you're talking about some people, some folks there with some real expertise. This is Ms. Crean's letter to the Premier. She acknowledges, "The stories of delay in complaint processing and the zealous over-application of section 34 at the under-resourced commission are legion. There is no question that the organization must be restructured to increase both its effectiveness and relevance...."

The author of this letter, Ms. Crean, then goes on to say, "A central tenet of Bill 107 would eliminate its role in the investigation of human rights complaints. The answer to ensuring equitable access to justice and human rights remedies for the people of Ontario does not lie in such a provision." What an obvious thing. It's just so obvious. It's like addressing the problem, Mr. Tabuns, of overcrowded criminal courts by saying, "We'll solve the problem by telling victims of crime that they won't have a publicly funded police force to investigate the offence for the purpose of a prosecution." Because that's what the government is doing to the investigative powers of the commission by eliminating the commission.

Ms. Crean: "It is short-sighted to suggest that a model of direct access to the tribunal will result in a more effective enforcement of human rights for the vast majority of people who experience discrimination." Let's understand, obviously and logically, what she means by that. If one has means—and I'm talking about cash-on-



the-barrelhead kind of means: money, wealth—then one can retain lawyers or I suppose one could hire investigators. There are any number of firms that hold themselves out as specialists, experts in investigation. Then one would have direct access and one could litigate to their heart's content, if they have means. I appreciate that Ms. Crean is very careful when she talks about how this proposal will not "result in a more effective enforcement of human rights for the vast majority of people who experience discrimination," because the vast majority of people who suffer discrimination don't have the kind of means that you need to hire a lawyer, never mind hire private investigative resources.

This is where Ms. Crean then refers to the post facto statement by the Attorney General about his third pillar. The third pillar is full access to legal assistance. But for the life of me, parliamentary assistant—and I will suffer your guidance if need be—I can't find the third pillar anywhere in this bill. I can't find even a general declaration about right to counsel, as we find in federal young offender legislation—you know what I'm talking about, don't you?—that gives the court the power to appoint counsel to ensure there is representation. Nowhere in Bill 107 is the third pillar articulated for the purpose of being a statutory third pillar.

The third pillar is some catch-up on the part of Mr. Bryant when he got caught. It was one of those things written on the proverbial back of the napkin. One of the aides, one of the high-priced staff from behind the Speaker's chair, sent the note with the third pillar.

Ms. Cornish is an advocate of direct access. She and I disagree in that regard. She is very much critical, because her proposal included, yes, statutory guarantees to legal assistance.

Legal aid certificates? A legal aid system that's already overtaxed, overburdened, under-resourced? You haven't even begun to address the crisis in family law representation for legal aid certificates. Most lawyers won't take certificates for family law because of the artificially low caps imposed on them. They simply can't do an adequate job for their client.

Where are the clinics? I haven't seen hide or hair of the specialized clinics that the present Attorney General was so fond of advocating when he was but a mere aspirant to the position.

Ms. Crean, Ombudsperson and director of human rights at York University, writes, "The commitment to a publicly funded legal support centre is not present in Bill 107; neither are there any details of what such a service might provide."

One of the biggest areas of concern and complaints about discrimination—and folks at the commission know this—is in the workplace. We're talking about people who are de facto working, maybe not at the highest-paying jobs but working. Legal aid? They don't qualify for legal aid, because they're working. They're not impecunious. They don't qualify for legal aid.

You and I both know, Mr. Parliamentary Assistant, that legal fees can amount in short order to not just tens of thousands of dollars, but \$50,000 and \$60,000 and

\$70,000 and \$80,000, well beyond the means of even most middle-class families and income earners. It's true. In and of itself, it's another topic for debate.

Why you would somehow herald the privatization of human rights litigation—it is the privatization of human rights litigation. It's very much the American model. You read about it all the time in the States: You use various states' civil rights laws and sue the offender—the employer. These big lawsuits with these lawyers with contingency fees—God bless; we have them now in Ontario too—perhaps provide a modest increase in access to these sorts of things, but they're very private affairs. More often than not, they get settled privately, which is one of the concerns, because then you don't create a body of law, do you, Mr. Parliamentary Assistant? It's private litigation. There's a deal. You settle for X number of dollars, and part of the deal is that you don't talk about the settlement. That's what a privatized, direct-access process means.

But there are folks here in this chamber, along with a whole lot of folks out there in the real Ontario, who understand that fighting discrimination entails a much broader public interest than just the settlement between the victim and the perpetrator of the discrimination.

1640

Mr. Tascona has this letter as well, I'm sure, and if not, I'm going to share it with him. Of course he does, because a copy was sent to John Tory. Ms. Crean goes on: "Notwithstanding any arguments to the contrary, complainants will now be compelled to hire their own legal counsel for bringing cases before the tribunal. The certainty of legal costs"—of course, that one can say without hesitation: the certainty of death, taxes and legal fees—"will discourage the average person from bringing a complaint forward." Is this the kind of human rights system this government wants to create here in the province of Ontario, after so many people have worked so hard over the course of so many years? And they have. The development of the Human Rights Code itself has been a long, torturous process here in this chamber, a whole lot of commitment by a whole lot of committed people.

Ms. Crean goes further: "This will create a chilling effect upon the exercise of the rights enshrined in the code, and in effect constitute a denial of access to justice." So the hallmark of Dalton McGuinty's Liberal Ontario, its legacy, is going to be the passage of legislation that will constitute, for as long as that legislation is in effect, a denial of access to justice. That's plain wrong, just plain wrong.

Ms. Crean, in closing, says the existing system "occupies a position of eminence in national and international human rights fora." Bless her; the plural of "forum" is "fora." "Its performance in this regard has been widely acclaimed and will be closely scrutinized. I urge you to uphold the integrity of the commission, and to preserve our democratic tradition of broad public consultation in matters of such fundamental importance."

I understand that there are folks out there who don't agree with Ms. Crean. I understand that. But rather than



simply, like keeping score at a basketball game, saying "X number on this side and Y number on this side," let's understand the arguments themselves. I challenge any one of the government members in this chamber, any one of you, to tell me where the analysis of Ms. Crean is flawed or faulty. I challenge any one of you to tell me where Ms. Crean has misstated the facts or misunderstood the bill before us, Bill 107.

I was impressed by the article written by Dr. Lorne Foster, a sociologist who teaches at York University in the areas of social justice studies and human rights. He notes in his article, which was published in *Share*, that this bill—those aren't his words. Now we're getting into the quote. I'm going to share these with Hansard so they have a little bit of assistance in getting these things down right, as they always do. But this bill, he says, "eliminates the commission's investigation and compliance functions, which have been in place for 40 years." He goes on to ask, "What does direct access mean for racialized communities? People of colour come from diverse socio-economic backgrounds from working poor to highly skilled professionals. Many people of colour, even foreign-trained professionals, fall into the category of the economically vulnerable."

Here's an illustration, and this brings us down to real-life scenarios: "For instance, picture this," Dr. Foster says. "You are a neurosurgeon, originally from Iran, who drives a taxicab, or a nurse from the Philippines who is a live-in caregiver, or a university professor from Uganda working as a court interpreter"—none of those three scenarios in any way, shape or form unlikely; we all know that, however tragic it is. "You may not be familiar with the legalese. English is your second or third language and you probably speak with an accent. Do you have enough money to hire a lawyer? Probably not. You're the working poor so you don't qualify for legal aid. Therefore you have to draft your own complaint of discrimination against your employer, and you tell it like a story. Your complaint is served. Your employer's lawyer responds to your complaint with a 15-page answer and two inches of supporting documents. The package sets out that you are fired for cause and accuses you of being an inveterate liar and charges that your complaint is vague."

That's how direct access begins. You are caught in an immediate power imbalance. What do you do now?

As Dalton McGuinty and the Liberals would have it, you're entitled to direct access. You've got some high-priced Bay Street law firm with lawyers with Montblanc pens and Rolex watches and Gucci shoes and the Mercedes-Benzes, and there you are all by yourself. You've got a law firm that's got junior lawyers and it's got law clerks and it's got legal researchers and process servers and investigators of their own and people who'll videotape you through the smoky windows of an undercover vehicle—that one's true. And then there's you.

You are caught in an immediate power imbalance. You don't have commission staff to investigate your complaint and get evidence. You don't have commission

staff to appear in court to prosecute the offender, the discriminating party. You don't have commission staff to perhaps mediate between the complainant and the person accused of discrimination and, of course, in the course of mediating, to ensure that power imbalances are addressed, amongst other things. No, because this is Dalton McGuinty's direct access. This is American-style "You got the money? We got the time."

As Dr. Foster writes, "If the Liberal government has its way, this will be the new human rights system in Ontario, a legal maze that traps people of colour, and instead of protecting their human rights, disempowers them. Will there be road maps? Will there be signposts along this yellow brick road? Then how do you get the Wizard of Oz to hear your complaint? You have to do more than simply click your heels and make a wish."

It goes on, "For people of colour, the Ontario human rights system is a sacred trust and a legacy bestowed upon them by parents and grandparents who, at great sacrifice, fought to break down systemic barriers because they knew their children's lives and futures depended on them."

That's Dr. Lorne Foster, a sociologist teaching at York University in the areas of social justice studies and human rights, and that article appeared in a publication called *Share*.

#### 1650

Here's an interesting e-mail, commenting, again, on the mythology that was being developed around extended time frames. Nobody is suggesting that there aren't some huge delays at the commission/tribunal. I'm not going to name the person, because it could well be an employee. Here are some observations:

"Average age that a case spent" in the Ontario Human Rights Commission is "around 14 months every year, (despite somebody's claim that it's around three to four years.)"

"The number sent to tribunal ... seems small (150-250 every year)"—and that's consistent with the material Miss Hall gave us just a couple of weeks ago—"but the ultimate goal of OHRC"—the Ontario Human Rights Commission—is not to send the cases to tribunal, "it's to solve them.... The ultimate goal of a human rights application is not to be heard in court, it's for the complainant to have their case resolved and the respondent to learn his lesson from the case. Public interest remedies are the central key in the prevention and education process. It's exactly what OHRC does, in a very effective way."

I don't know this to be the case or not. I don't know, but here's a person who seems to know what she or he is talking about.

"Around 70%-80% of the cases OHRC sent to the tribunal do not have their case heard in court anyway, they are settled at the tribunal level," based on the material accumulated in the file during the course of that complainant's travel process through the Human Rights Commission.

Then Mr. Bryant bragging about the—what is it? He is going to bury in the commission his Anti-Racism Secretariat. The commission already has a race relations



division pursuant to the Ontario Human Rights Code, and for the life of me I don't see how Mr. Bryant can see fit to brag about burying an Anti-Racism Secretariat in the Human Rights Commission when, if we're going to be serious about that, we should be having a stand-alone Anti-Racism Secretariat like New Democrats have said ever since the last government abolished the Anti-Racism Secretariat—mind you, a circumstance that the Liberals have been more than pleased to maintain, haven't they, Mr. Zimmer?

To somehow suggest that burying the Anti-Racism Secretariat, just because you call it that, in the Human Rights Commission when there's already, by statute, a race relations division, is absurd, and it's offensive to people who care about these sorts of things, and I believe most Ontarians do, the vast majority of Ontarians.

I got an interesting letter from Harvey Starkman, Toronto Residents In Partnership, up in North York.

"Dear Premier McGuinty:

"One of the defining differences between a democracy and totalitarian state is that in a democracy human rights are respected and protected.

"Since the days of Leslie Frost, when the first pieces of legislation were introduced to protect the rights of its citizens, Ontario has been in the forefront in the area of human rights. Now the government seems bent on dismantling the very nature of that protection by removing the process whereby average citizens can seek redress for human rights violations....

"Your proposal to 'streamline' the human rights process will do away with the protection offered to middle-class and working-class members of society. You doom all but the affluent to suffer intolerable affronts to their human rights.

"What is needed are more investigators, not fewer; an open and welcoming system free of bureaucratic red tape; a system that anyone in Ontario can access with ease and in the hope of justice and fairness."

What an astute observation on the part of Mr. Starkman, one that the government would prefer to dismiss.

Do you detect from time to time, Ms. Elliott, a little bit of arrogance on the part of the Liberals here, a little bit of, "We know better than everybody, and don't waste our time. We've already got our ducks lined up in terms of the cheerleaders for this proposal and, no, we have no interest in talking to any number of organizations"? Organizations like the Canadian Arab Federation, which I talked about today in my question on behalf of New Democrats to the Acting Premier, an organization that was here at Queen's Park today saying there's got to be more meaningful consultation."

I can hear the Attorney General now, pushing himself up in his chair to be a little taller than those around him, saying, "But it's been studied for"—how long is it?—"13, 14, 15 years." Talk about the coroner's report all you want; the fact is, there are some very serious concerns about the direct access model out there by a whole lot of Ontarians, and the arguments that support those concerns are pretty substantial.

Don't even for a minute suggest that it's whimsical or frivolous—none of you, don't you dare—for Fiona Crean, ombudsperson at York University, with her expertise, to suggest and raise the concerns that she has in her letter to the Premier, or that it's whimsical or frivolous on the part of Professor Foster to make his concerns known on behalf of the community of people of colour here in Ontario, or the person who sent me the e-mail just making some everyday, common folk, real-time, common sense observations about the Human Rights Commission. Oh, I should indicate that she references the OHRC, Ontario Human Rights Commission, annual report.

Let's take a look at another real-life example. Let's consider kids with autism and their folks here in Ontario. As you know, Shelley Martel, our colleague from Nickel Belt, has put her heart and soul into that file. The Ontario Human Rights Commission has been an invaluable, irreplaceable advocate for the rights of those kids. Without the commission, with the repeal of part IV in the Dalton McGuinty Liberal government's Bill 107, those kids with autism have had their champions stolen from them. In fact, those files that staff at the Human Rights Commission have put together so capably, with so much hard work on their part—and it has been hard work—will simply lapse if and when this bill passes for those cases which haven't begun their hearings before a tribunal itself.

Kids with autism—you know the kids, the ones who turned six and were being denied autism treatment, IBI treatment—and their families are just bankrupting themselves: second and third mortgages on the home; both parents working even though they've got a kid with autism and maybe two or three other kids at home who need their care; maxing out credit cards; hitting up every family member they could find and tapping friends to pay the thousands upon thousands of dollars a month that it costs to hire private sector IBI treatment for kids with autism because the government denies it to them, notwithstanding that it promised that those children would get it. Oh, Dalton McGuinty promised that when he wanted your vote. The only way that those families could bring those cases of those kids who were suffering discrimination on the basis of age, as defined in the Ontario Human Rights Code, the only way their cases could get to a determination was with a public Ontario Human Rights Commission. If for no other reason, if for nobody else, this bill should be shelved out of regard for those kids and their families, their parents, who I say were well-served by the very same Human Rights Commission that Dalton McGuinty and the Liberals want to dismantle.

Far be it for me to suggest that perhaps there's some motive—

1700

**Mr. Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre):** Oh, come on.

**Mr. Kormos:** Well, the government has been on the receiving end of complaints regarding discrimination as often as not, hasn't it? It goes back to one of the initial



observations, and that was the need for the commissioner to be an officer of the assembly to avoid the appearance of conflict. What possible reason would motivate this government to be so mean-spirited, to be so disdainful of so many people, for the Attorney General to surround himself with his lawyer friends and to abandon victims of discrimination, like those kids with autism, who had their parents, who had a couple of pro bono lawyers, who had Shelley Martel, but also had a Human Rights Commission that was prepared to go to bat for them and take on the incredible resources of the government. That's what they were taking on: They were taking on the government.

I was in court on more than a few occasions, seeing some of the stuff—piles and piles and piles of affidavits and so-called experts. People don't self-fund that type of litigation when they're seeking redress, my friends. They need the state to come to their aid. New Democrats will be voting against Bill 107 and we look forward to it being in committee.

**The Acting Speaker:** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Mario Sergio (York West):** I only have two minutes or less to speak on this particular bill, but I know that members of the government will be addressing this bill later on today, and I'm sure we will have an opportunity to hear a totally different story than we have from the Niagara Centre member. Whatever he said would have had a bit of credence if he had said that for the first time in 40 years members of this House have an opportunity to address this most important bill—for the first time in 40 years. We never had an opportunity; we never had a government, we never had a minister bring this to a debate in the House.

I don't dispute that this is a very important bill, absolutely, but I wish the member or members would address the fact that this government—this minister—for the first time, has brought this bill to be debated in the House. The reason is because for years, perhaps, it needed to be addressed, and some changes are required, indeed. I'm sure the member from Niagara Centre will have further opportunity, but he has failed to mention the good that this bill—the changes that this bill is going to bring about. That is why the bill is in front of us.

They may vote against it, but I hope they will reap the benefits of the bill for the people we all represent in the House. The member from Niagara Centre is one of those members who represents the people in his area. I think he has the duty and the responsibility to advise the people in his area what exactly the bill is doing in support of the people of Ontario.

**Mrs. Christine Elliott (Whitby-Ajax):** As my colleague from Niagara Centre has indicated, Bill 107 has generated significant comment from the public, both in terms of individuals and from those representing disabled groups, racial minorities—a number of different groups.

While it is important, we all recognize that it is time to take another look at the human rights legislation; it is time to modernize it and streamline it. With the backlog of complaints, obviously something needs to be done.

From my conversations and meetings with some of the groups that are very much in favour of this legislation, and with groups that are very much opposed to the changes in it, even the groups that are very much in favour still have some significant concerns that have not been addressed by the legislation. Generally speaking, I would say that they fall into two categories.

One category is the whole issue of legal support for people who are really not capable of bringing complaints forward on their own without proper assistance. There's been no legal support recommended or brought forward in the legislation. All that has been raised is a vague promise that there will be some kind of legal support, and perhaps a million and a half dollars will be sufficient to satisfy it. That won't even come close to touching the tip of the iceberg with these complaints.

The second is the fact that if the powers that exist today are taken away from the commission, there will be no means of examining systemic discrimination. All we'll have is a one-on-one examination of discrimination between particular parties. The public interest cannot possibly be served, because there's going to be no mechanism to bring forward complaints of systemic discrimination, which is in the public interest.

I sincerely hope, as we proceed with committee hearings on this matter, that the Attorney General will bear these significant concerns in mind, even from the groups that support this legislation.

**The Acting Speaker:** Questions and comments? The member for Beaches—East York.

**Mr. Peter Tabuns (Toronto—Danforth):** Correction, Mr. Speaker: the member for Toronto—Danforth, although since he's good looking, I don't really mind the misstatement.

First I have to say that the very lucid presentation by Mr. Kormos touched on the main themes that have to be addressed in this debate.

I was first made aware of this initiative during the by-election in Toronto—Danforth in March. People came to the all-candidates meetings and, in a state of shock, said, "Are you aware of these changes going on? Are you aware of the substance of the direction the government is going in? Do you support this? Do you oppose this?" They asked the same of my Liberal opponent. All of us on at the all-candidates meetings were quite taken aback at what was presented to us. In fact, what has been presented in this House—this legislation—is even more troubling, to my mind, than the points that were put forward by the people who came to the all-candidates meetings, whose main concern was that they have a consultation before the legislation came forward. I thought then, and think now, that that was reasonable.

Frankly, the legislation before us can be judged on a number of points. As Mr. Kormos has said, do we treat discrimination as a public issue? Do we believe that public resources should go into protecting the population from discrimination or not? Do we believe that these matters should be put on the shoulders of private individuals? Those are fundamental questions, and as Mr.



Kormos has said, when we deal with criminal law, we would not simply say, "Victims of crime should be left to fend for themselves before the courts." We would never say that. That is what's being said with this legislation. That is the point Mr. Kormos was making. If they're left to fend for themselves, will the government provide adequate resources? I doubt it, and I'll get to speak to that on the next round.

**Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti (Scarborough Southwest):** I just wanted to comment briefly on the remarks by the member from Niagara Centre. We are on second reading of this bill, and I hope and expect that this will go to committee—hopefully to the justice policy committee; I can't say for sure. At that time, hopefully we will get some good public input on this bill and also the concerns that some may have.

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I also want to say that it is quite a challenge to undertake to try to modernize and overhaul a bill that has basically not been changed for more than 40 years. The present system, we know, is not working. It's taking a long time for the tribunal and for the Ontario Human Rights Commission to make decisions. Look at the example regarding the TTC and whether or not it should call out stops at Toronto subway stations: It took apparently three years for it to make a decision on that simple matter. So things do have to change. The implementation of two things—the disability rights secretariat and the anti-racism secretariat—I think are important, and to clearly define the roles that those individuals are going to have and what they will do and how they will investigate complaints is important.

We're trying to strengthen and make the system better, but we've got a long way to go still. I commend the government and I commend the minister for bringing this forward and bringing it into debate and into discussion. I think we have a way to go still. I don't think that we'll be done that easily on this bill, but we do need to make the system better because I honestly believe that it's presently not working as well as it could be.

**The Acting Speaker:** That concludes the time available for questions and comments. I'll return to the member from Niagara Centre.

**Mr. Kormos:** One of my concerns, I've got to tell you, is that the government is going to try to bury the committee hearings around this bill in the dog days of summer, through, oh, let's say, July and August, when any number of organizations are not going to be equipped in terms of boards being able to approve submissions and when the media scrutiny will be marginal, to say the least. That's why I've made it very clear to the government that if it has any regard whatsoever for process in this matter, the time for committee hearings is in September, when there can be a focused, careful, studied approach, when we can host those committee hearings at Queen's Park in a very, very public way without fear of the hottest, most humid days of the year frustrating the best efforts of any number of members of the public who would want to have input.

I'm concerned as well about the premise, and part of it is the development of the mythology around the commission because, while everybody agrees that there are some serious delay issues, the reality is that the commission itself resolves over 57% of all cases, all complaints, within an average time frame of 12.4 months.

So I say to my colleague from the Liberal backbenches, I don't envy you having to defend this legislation. I appreciate that boilerplate sort of defences are the easiest ones, but to merely say that something's 40 years old and should be changed is probably offensive to a whole bunch of your colleagues, being at least my age, if not older. Perhaps we should apply this to this Legislature. "Forty years and you're out" would be a most interesting result, wouldn't it, Mr. Berardinetti?

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate.

**Ms. Deborah Matthews (London North Centre):** I will be sharing my time with my colleague the member from Willowdale.

I am very, very proud to rise in the House today to speak in support of Bill 107, the Human Rights Code Amendment Act. This opportunity stands out among the many opportunities I've had to speak on behalf of my constituents in London North Centre as a special chance to recognize our government's move forward in the area of human rights. This bill will have a significant, positive and proactive impact on the rights of all Ontarians.

We are at an exciting crossroads in Ontario. We are here in the process of modernizing and improving our current human rights legislation. We are fixing what is a very broken system, and it is a system that protects the rights of all of us. We can't underestimate what this change means for everyone—for minority groups, for disadvantaged people and for the general public's awareness. We are debating, for the first time in over 40 years in this Legislature, a bill that finally recognizes the importance of entrenching and protecting the rights of all Ontarians.

I expect to hear many voices in the House today supporting—maybe not all, but many voices will be supporting the much-needed and comprehensive modernization that can occur and will occur with this bill. I'm looking forward to hearing what my colleagues will add to this debate. Although I do enjoy hearing from my Queen's Park colleagues, I would like to begin by saying that the merits of this bill have already been articulated by a long list of experts in this field. We've received very positive feedback on this legislation from a wide variety of sources and interest groups.

I'd like to draw your attention to a quote from Barbara Hall, who is actually with us this afternoon in the Legislature. Welcome. Barbara, of course, is the chief commissioner of the Ontario Human Rights Commission, a position for which she is wonderfully qualified. She states that, "The commission will continue to work with the government to build a renewed human rights system that maintains Ontario's position as an international leader in human rights." This is a position that we must protect and continue to improve. Her remarks are clear



and concise. She sums it up perfectly. We are, in Ontario, international leaders in human rights. But we can't just rest on our laurels; we must continue to continually improve and advance the cause of human rights to maintain our place, to be world leaders in this field.

In the same vein as the very respected Ms. Hall, Michael Gottheil, chair of the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario, has said, "Under this legislation, Ontarians would be able to have their human rights complaints resolved quickly, efficiently and effectively.

"I look forward to working with the government on implementation."

I can assure Mr. Gottheil that we all look forward to working with him in the months ahead.

I'd also like to quote from Bob Sexsmith from London, someone with whom I've worked on a number of issues. He says, "We want to applaud the undertaking ... made in the Legislature to establish a new human rights legal support centre that would provide legal assistance to claimants at each stage of the new process, regardless of level of income." Mr. Sexsmith is the secretary of the board of directors of the Advocacy Centre for Tenants Ontario and is a strong advocate on social issues.

So I look forward to seeing this legislation through the process. We're now at second reading. We're debating the merits of the bill. It will go to committee. We will hear from the public through the committee process, and then back here for third reading debate.

We want to ensure that this bill will address those in need of assistance. We are committed to building a new human rights system that works for its clients and doesn't impose unnecessary barriers, waits, fees or administrative hassles.

This bill has an organic approach to modernizing Ontario's human rights system. We're not simply applying window dressing to the process; we're completely updating the way Ontarians receive assistance and education about their rights. We're moving to a model where all complaints move to the tribunal. We're moving to a model where those in need of legal assistance will receive publicly funded legal supports. Most importantly, we're moving to a model where the commission can be proactive and focus on the systemic discrimination issues, focus on its long-term vision, which is improved public education campaigns and resources. There are human rights violations that we know exist; they are systemic. We need to improve public education on those issues. We need to do more research. This legislation will allow expanded research capabilities and strengthened advocacy roles—this important work that needs to be done. And for the people who are accessing the system, this will allow a timely approach to addressing complaints.

Those are the four vital elements—education, research, advocacy and timeliness—that this bill addresses.

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I know first-hand from discussions with the Attorney General, from my research into this bill and from the

feedback I receive from constituents that this is the right path to take. I'm very proud today to speak in support of a bill that will make Ontario a leader in protecting the rights of citizens. This is the right thing to do, and this is the right time to do it.

I know a member of the opposition stated that the bill is simply a move to privatize the human rights system. I think that he may have mixed up the government of the day. We are not a pro-privatize government. This bill brings forth modernizing, expanding and strengthening tools to our Ontario human rights system. It is the furthest possible thing from privatization or a two-tiered system. There is no simpler way to put it. We believe in accessibility, universality and equity, and this bill reflects just that. They are core values for us and this bill articulates them.

I think this government can be proud of our record. We consult with stakeholders, we research policy options and we follow through with comprehensive, modern and responsive policy. We heard that the system wasn't working effectively and we acted. I'm proud of that. The Attorney General has addressed head-on a system that was grinding to a halt. It's not always the most popular decision, but it is the right thing to do and a long, long overdue change.

Any system where only 6% of the complaints received were making it through to the tribunal stage is flawed, bogged down and in need of streamlining and updating. I don't think anyone argues that the current system is working the way it should. Any system that takes, on average, three to four years to investigate a complaint obviously needs better resources and better-defined goals. Ontarians deserve better, and through this bill, they will be getting just that.

Last year, over 2,400 complaints were lodged. That's a significant number. People bringing forth complaints deserve their day in court. Legal action is a demanding, draining process for anyone to endure. We don't want this process to be prolonged or delayed for people who are bringing those cases forward.

This proposed model brings an unprecedented level of transparency to human rights decisions. It's going to maintain Ontario's place and improve access to justice for those who face discrimination.

Under our proposed model, the tribunal will be significantly stronger. It will have the power to compel witnesses, to retrieve documents and to get the answers it needs to make a fair judgment. We won't waste years of people's lives.

Let's not underestimate the toll that takes: years of their lives, tying them up in courts, delaying decisions and adding unnecessary layers to the process.

This bill allows the potential to bring justice to people with legitimate human rights concerns. I'm very proud of the long-term vision of this bill. It addresses the underlying and latent challenges that remain to be resolved in Ontario. We have yet to completely eliminate racism, sexism and all other kinds of discrimination in this province. But with the two new secretariats that



would be established within the Ontario Human Rights Commission, we can begin a new era of research and public policy development for equity. Focusing on anti-racism and disability, these two secretariats will tell us how we can serve Ontarians better.

Once again, I would like to emphasize that I'm proud of the Attorney General's work in providing the people of Ontario with better human rights protection through this bill, and I look forward to the continuation of the process: the consultations, the input that we will receive at the committee process.

Any legislation can be improved. I'm sure this will be improved, and I encourage anyone who has comments on this bill to participate in the public consultation that will follow second reading.

**Mr. Zimmer:** I'm pleased to take part in this debate. Since the early 1990s, successive provincial governments have talked about changes to the human rights system and have commissioned and undertaken studies, reports and reviews, but this is the first time a government has taken that final step, the next step, the most meaningful step of actually introducing legislation to make significant positive change to Ontario's human rights system.

Reports urging reform for the last 15 years have sat on the shelf despite calls for change. Reviews, consultations and report after report have concluded that our human rights system was broken. The Ontario Human Rights Commission itself has been pressing for changes for at least a decade. Over the last year, we held meetings and consultations with over 30 individuals and groups, including many community groups, legal practitioners, legal clinics, academics, employer and labour organizations, and business groups. Here is what some of them had to say:

"I applaud the Attorney General's legislation to reform the human rights system. Human rights and community groups have asked for this for many years. We welcome this government's commitment to human rights." That's Ruth Carey, executive director of the HIV and AIDS Legal Clinic.

John Fraser, executive director of the Centre for Equality Rights in Accommodation, said in a letter to the Toronto Star, "Direct access to a human rights hearing is critical if the human rights of people in Ontario are to be adequately protected and promoted.... The Attorney General should be commended for taking these important steps to reform Ontario's human rights process to allow claimants direct access to a hearing."

Mary O'Donoghue, constitutional, civil liberties and human rights chair of the Ontario Bar Association, said, "The changes proposed are timely and well-designed to solve the current system problems.... Ontario will reap long-term benefits from these changes. We applaud the plan to permit direct access for complainants to the Human Rights Tribunal, as we believe that this will greatly enhance access to justice for those who believe that their human rights have not been respected. Respondents will be provided with a timely, fair and balanced hearing process."

In the Hamilton Spectator, Hugh Tye, executive director of Hamilton Mountain Legal and Community Services, said, "This human rights reform is something numerous community groups have asked for for too long. We all recognize the problems. Let's get on with fixing them."

Recently, the Canadian Jewish Congress said, "The Canadian Jewish Congress applauds the government for the proposed creation of an anti-racism secretariat and a disability-rights secretariat within the commission. We look forward to working with the Ontario government on the key details in this new legislation and subsequent regulations, ensuring continued access to a practical remedy in human rights cases for everyone in this province."

On May 2, the Ottawa Citizen published an opinion piece by University of Toronto law professor Lorne Sossin, in which he said, "Reform of the human rights system is long overdue.... Given the discussions that gave rise to this set of proposals and the many studies and consultations that have preceded this round, it is difficult to imagine any views on this matter which will remain hidden.... The government's current proposal is ... a necessary and a positive step. The government should be lauded for not simply adding more reports on the subject of human rights reform but for acting."

This government is resolved to act on calls for change to our human rights system that have been heard for over a decade now. Change has been too long in coming. It's time for action.

Currently, the Ontario Human Rights Commission spends 85% of its resources on processing, investigating and litigating individual complaints of discrimination, one complaint at a time. If a settlement is not reached, the commission may decide to refer a complaint to the Human Rights Tribunal for a hearing. Currently, the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario only deals with cases referred by the commission, which average about 100 a year. It hears evidence and decides whether or not discrimination occurred and what needs to be done to remedy the situation and prevent further discrimination. This process can take up to five years to complete.

The proposed Human Rights Code Amendment Act would free up the commission's resources so it could focus on working to prevent discrimination and take a strategic approach to dealing with the most pressing human rights issues in a proactive way, instead of waiting to act until actual complaints have been filed.

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The commission would have the ability to file a complaint on its own behalf or to intervene in any case before the tribunal where there are significant issues affecting the public interest—disability issues, for instance. However, the commission's primary role would focus on proactive measures to address systemic discrimination in Ontario, including racism and barriers to people with disabilities. Currently, 50% of the commission's caseload is disability-related.

To provide the commissioner with recommendations and advice on these issues, an anti-racism secretariat and



a disability rights secretariat would be established within the commission. The commission has long been recognized internationally for its past work and this change will allow it to build on this past success. A strengthened and invigorated human rights commission would signal Ontario's commitment to workplace, housing and services that are free from discrimination.

Under the proposed legislation, the human rights tribunal would provide a modern, streamlining and efficient way of resolving disputes, by allowing individuals or groups to file claims directly with the tribunal. Direct access would speed up the complaints process by eliminating duplication that exists between the commission's work and the tribunal's work. We believe it is more efficient to have one body, the tribunal, responsible for enforcing rights under the code, and the other body, the commission, responsible for preventing discrimination.

For the past 40 years, the two pillars of our human rights system have been the commission and the tribunal. With this bill, we would add a third pillar to the human rights system: access to legal assistance. We would establish a new human rights support centre. We would ensure that, regardless of levels of income, abilities or disabilities or personal circumstances, all Ontarians would be entitled to receive equal and effective protection of human rights. Under these proposals, these bodies would work together in one system for the protection and promotion of human rights.

This province led the way in supporting human rights back in 1962, 44 years ago, when Ontario enacted the first Human Rights Code in Canada. We are continuing to lead the way by strengthening our human rights system and by improving access to justice for those who face discrimination. The proposed Human Rights Code Amendment Act, 2006, would, if passed, benefit all Ontarians. It would maintain Ontario's international leadership in promoting human rights, equality, diversity and tolerance. Mr. Speaker, and to all my colleagues in this Legislature, I urge you to support this legislation.

**The Acting Speaker:** Questions and comments?

**Mrs. Elliott:** The point has been made by my colleagues from London North Centre and Willowdale that the human rights system needs to be fixed and is in need of modernization. I think that from all the comments we've heard from the speakers here today, no one is disagreeing that we do need to make some changes to the human rights system, but I think what we really need to do is to slow down and make sure that those changes are thoughtful and meaningful. If there haven't been any changes in the last 40 years, we need to make sure we do it properly and we need to be listening to all the people who are involved in this.

That's why I think it's important that we've had a lot of discussion about whether there has been meaningful consultation with the disability rights groups and with the racialized minorities, and numerous other groups and individuals, about whether their concerns have been heard or not. I think that, for whatever reason, the bill has

proceeded to this point, but all is not lost. We still have time for meaningful change to be made. In order for that to be done, it's important for all the parties involved to have full participation and input into this legislation. By that, I mean all the parties in this House and all the interested groups and individuals who want to speak to this issue and want to have input. More particularly, we need to have a commitment from the Attorney General to listen to those concerns and to make those changes so that we'll end up with human rights legislation that is modern and meaningful and fixes the problems that we're facing. I would urge the Attorney General again to make sure that he listens and commits to making the necessary changes along the way.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Toronto-Danforth.

**Mr. Tabuns:** It's been useful to hear the comments from the members from London North Centre and from Willowdale, but they haven't given me any assurance. I'm fundamentally concerned by this move that will in some ways treat those who come asking for assistance in dealing with human rights discrimination the way others are treated for criminal injuries or criminal victimization.

In the last week, constituency week, I had an opportunity to talk to people in my riding in community legal clinics. What did they tell me about the state of law for those who are outside the Ontario legal aid plan, for those people who are relying on the government to provide them with support and assistance; frankly, people who will be very much in the same situation after this bill is passed, as I expect it will be? The Criminal Injuries Compensation Board: There is tremendous difficulty getting access to that board to have hearings. People are even being denied application forms to go forward to the board to have their criminal injury cases heard. Today we had people from the Ontario Association of Police Services Boards talking to us, saying that with the VCARS program, for victims of criminal activities, that office, the money going to those people has not changed in 20 years. The need to support victims of crime, something that should be paid for out of this central fund, has increasingly shifted onto police departments, and services are provided by police officers who shouldn't be doing that work, who should be out on the beat in the community. So I don't have confidence that when this commission is dismantled, there actually will be support in place for those who need that support.

**Mr. Mario G. Racco (Thornhill):** Of course I'm pleased to speak on second reading of Bill 107. I want to compliment the Attorney General for bringing these amendments here in front of the House. After all, the Human Rights Code has not been updated in the last 40 years, and I believe it's important, because of so many changes that have taken place, that we do update the code. Again, Bill 107 is going to do that.

We are dealing with second reading. This bill is going to go for public input, and surely if there are comments that the opposition or the community will bring to the attention of the committee when the committee will start hearing the comments, those comments can be brought to



the attention of the Attorney General, and I suspect that the minister will make the proper adjustments.

What the bill does, among a number of other things, is it would establish within the Ontario Human Rights Commission two new secretariats to conduct research and develop public policy. One of the two secretariats would be an anti-racism secretariat, and the other would be a disabilities secretariat. I believe they will certainly be able to respond much better to the needs of Ontarians, who have not seen a change in an area which quite frankly has changed significantly in the last 40 years. Imagine.

It is something that we all should support. I trust that this honourable House will do the right thing at the right time and support it so that the proper change can take place.

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**Mr. Norman W. Sterling (Lanark-Carleton):** I couldn't get a petition in today, so I thought I'd speak now.

This particular process draws me back to the days when I was parliamentary assistant to the Attorney General a long, long time ago, 1978-79. At that time, we were in a minority Parliament. We dealt with many, many bills to reform laws which had been laid to rest for a long period of time. We brought in, at that time, the new Provincial Offences Act for the first time. We brought forward the new Family Law Reform Act, which was the first time that we had actually put into statute much of the common law that had been developed by our courts and put it into law. One of the great parts about a minority Parliament was that all parties knew that when it went to committee, there would be an even debate about what was going to be included in these very important law statutes.

Generally speaking, issues like this should not bear a lot of partisanship. They should be dealt with in honest terms, where delegations in front of committees would have a real chance to influence the outcome of the legislation, and any kind of amendments put forward would be seriously considered. Unfortunately, this government has a very, very poor record about listening and about changing and amending, even though there's a lot of sense associated with it. So it leaves us in the opposition somewhat skeptical of what's going to be a very important piece of legislation in the end.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Willowdale has two minutes to reply.

**Mr. Zimmer:** I thought I would take some of my time and introduce the chief commissioner and the eight commissioners who will be undertaking these very heavy responsibilities, should this legislation pass. They are the front-line soldiers and generals in working this legislation through after it passes in this body, and I'll ask them to stand: Chief Commissioner Barbara Hall.

*Applause.*

**Mr. Zimmer:** I'll ask folks to hold their applause so they don't cut into my two minutes.

Commissioner Vivian Jarvis, Commissioner Christiane Rabier, Commissioner Jeanette Case, Commissioner

Bhagat Taggar, Commissioner Fernand Lalonde, Commissioner Richard Théberge, Commissioner Ghulam Sajan, and Commissioner Pierre Charron.

*Applause.*

**Mr. Zimmer:** The three pillars of this legislation—I'll leave that as the final thought with the members here—are the commission itself, dealing with systemic issues of discrimination; the tribunal, which will deal with particular incidents and complaints of discrimination; and the access to a legal system which will allow all Ontarians to access the commission, either at the tribunal level or at the commission level. With this legislation, Ontario will continue its leadership role first established in 1962, 44 years ago.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr. Joseph N. Tascona (Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford):** I'm very pleased to join in the debate for the 15 minutes that are left in the session today, and I'll deal with the bill as best I can.

I think it's certainly an important piece of legislation. Obviously, the members who have debated this bill today are very passionate about human rights and certainly the evolution of human rights protection in this province, which was started by the Progressive Conservative Party in the 1960s and which evolved under Premier Davis in terms of changes that were made to the Human Rights Code over time. It certainly has evolved into a system that protects basic rights in this province, and we're all proud.

The problem that has been debated at length here today is the mechanism to ensure that those basic human rights and freedoms are litigated in a manner that will provide the claimant with due process and a remedy that deals with their concerns, at the same time balancing the rights of the accused, be they individuals, corporations, a landlord or someone else who provides a public service in this province.

The problem—and I have some experience in this area—has been getting to that point. I don't think it's uncommon, in terms of the criminal justice system, and especially in terms of the youth justice system, that the action, the wrongdoing, occurs just too far from the point when the person is dealt with in the court system and the sentence or the penalty is levied. I think that's the biggest problem we face with respect to the Ontario Human Rights Commission and the work they have done and have tried to do.

As you deal with it, the commission's role currently is to take the complaint, process it, put it forth to mediation and try to deal with that complaint before they get into investigation and come up with a decision whether to put it forth to the tribunal. As everybody knows, at one time there were boards of inquiry that were part of the commission, and those were split up to separate the commission from the Ontario Human Rights Tribunal as a matter of, some people felt, fairness, as a matter of due process to keep the two entities separate. This bill is not going to do anything to change that.

What the bill is proposing to do is eliminate the investigation phase, which, in my opinion, is fraught with



difficulties in terms of not only fairness but also, because it can become very subjective, in terms of the investigator who is dealing with the matter and in terms of the time it takes to investigate the matter.

I think the model being proposed by the minister is somewhat similar, in ways, to the Ontario Labour Relations Board, where a person puts in a complaint, there's a process where they try to resolve the complaint through a labour relations officer, and if it's not resolved, then it goes to a hearing in an expeditious manner to try to resolve it and bring an end to the litigious matter. That's what it is, in essence: A complaint becomes a litigious matter.

I don't have a problem with respect to speeding up the process to make sure the complainant and the people who are accused, the respondents in this matter, get the process over with so they can get on with their lives. If a remedy should be coming forth in the public interest, if someone is at fault, then that's what the process should be about. You may have some rights, but the thing is, do you have any remedies? That's been the biggest problem with the Human Rights Code in this province.

The one area that's problematic here is dealing with the legal costs for a complainant to deal with this. Not every complainant has the ability to process a complaint all the way through the system, although when they did get it into the system, with respect to the Ontario Human Rights Tribunal, there was always Ministry of the Attorney General legal staff there to carry the complaint to fruition through a hearing. Prior to that, it was the human rights officers who were in a position to assist the complainant in terms of dealing with the investigation, but they have to be hands-off because they're making a statutory decision with respect to this. That has been the problem for complainants. As we know, the legal aid system does not provide funding for human rights complaints. That's something that maybe the Attorney General should be considering in terms of dealing with providing complainants who are in financial need with the ability to get legal aid for human rights. I do know there are some sections in here that are dealing with new section 46.1, which allows the minister to "enter into agreements ... for the purposes of providing legal services and such other services ... to ... parties to a proceeding before the tribunal." But that's before the tribunal. We're not talking about dealing with the process with respect to getting your complaint launched and whatever. So you're going to be in a situation where there's going to be some poorly drafted complaints, and perhaps the person doesn't do the job that's necessary to make sure that their complaint covers the basic facts that are set out by the rules and the basic requirements for the remedy they're seeking. That's a big question mark in terms of dealing with this.

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What we're trying to find out here is a mechanism that's sort of inside the box we're dealing with at the Ontario Human Rights Commission. I know when we changed the Employment Standards Act, we set out a procedure where you could have a choice if you were

terminated, were looking for termination and severance pay and decided, "I'm going to go to the ministry, I'm going to use their services and I'm going to get my severance and termination pay, but I'm not going to go—because of the way the act was drafted, I can't also go civilly." This is one area where the United States is a little different than Canada. They use the courts to enforce their civil rights. We haven't used that because of the Supreme Court of Canada decision saying that if there's a mechanism in place, you can't use the courts to enforce human rights in this province, though there are varying degrees of how lawyers use it with respect to wrongful dismissal cases when they go after punitive damages. But the principle is in place that you can't use the courts because we have a human rights process in this province.

That's something I think the Attorney General should look at. I think, to be fair to people who want to protect their rights and if we really believe in human rights in this province, we should be looking at a system not dissimilar to the Employment Standards Act, where you make the choice: "I'm going to use the ministry services to get my termination and severance pay, or I'm not. I'm going to go to the courts and I'm going to go after the payments that I think are fair arising from a wrongful dismissal." That's something that maybe the Attorney General should be looking at. If this process doesn't work in terms of what they're trying to accomplish, which I think is to protect human rights and to provide a mechanism that will protect them in real time and in a real way, then perhaps we should be looking at allowing a complainant to either go to the commission or be able to go to the courts and enforce their rights with respect to human rights in the province.

I don't see any difficulties with that. They're saying, "Where would you get the lawyers?" Well, lawyers now in this province put through to the Attorney General, they work through contingency fees, they work under other mechanisms where they can charge at the end of the case or where there's a settlement. So there's definitely counsel out there that would be available to people in terms of dealing with these particular types of cases. Or you could bring back human rights types for the legal aid system so people who are of limited financial means could use that.

I think people should be given a choice and we should think outside the box. I've talked to a number of lawyers who are in this area and they would welcome being able to enforce human rights through the civil courts, to bring some reality in terms of dealing with human rights in this province. That's not anything against the work that could be done by the commission in terms of promoting human rights. That's something they should be doing, because it's important for people to have knowledge that that's not tolerated in this province, dealing with people who are going to discriminate against others. That's the role of the commission, and I don't have a problem with that.

What I have a problem with is the litigation end of it in terms of what we should be looking at here: a role for the Human Rights Tribunal to allow people to get due

process, to intelligently make a decision and go forth. But I can see very clearly that that Human Rights Tribunal is going to get bogged down in litigation very quickly. Certainly mediation plays a role. The Ontario Labour Relations Board is probably a model in terms of how they deal with their complaints. But let's be frank: The hearing dates are getting longer and longer at the Labour Relations Board, and they're starting to mirror what you can find in the civil court system—not necessarily in Toronto, but outside of Toronto, because Toronto is under case management and it's a much quicker litigation process.

That's something that I think the Attorney General should think about. I don't think he'd accept that. I don't think he's thought around that type of model in terms of bringing in the civil system to enforce human rights in this province. But it's something that I want to talk about, because I believe that's something that should be looked at to bring some real meaning to what human rights are in this province. Certainly, the people who are going to be involved—I have a lot of respect for Barbara Hall. I think she's going to be a good commissioner. But she has her hands full in terms of where she's going to be taking the law and where we're going to go with human rights in this province.

This is a method that certainly, in the short run, will provide complainants with a system where they can get their rights enforced more quickly. In the long run, I'm

not so sure how this is going to work, because you're going to have to have complainants being able to file intelligent briefs and complaints. As anyone knows, individuals who go after unions for duty of fair representation—they're probably some of the more poorly drafted types of complaints that are put out there, and many times they don't go anywhere because they don't say anything in terms of what the real facts are; they don't even look for a remedy that fits the facts. That's going to be a big challenge, in terms of how to allow complainants to file properly, but at the same time, employers and individuals who are accused of this have rights too. I wouldn't want to see the Human Rights Tribunal turning into a whipping type of situation, where people are going to be forced into settlements because they could be facing some severe penalties in terms of hearing times and they have to pay for their legal counsel, whereas the complainant doesn't have to pay for theirs. There's got to be some balance in terms of the system, in terms of fairness for both, that the tribunal isn't just used as a collection agency to go after employers and individuals that are accused, whether it's falsely or fairly. That's where the litigation process comes in.

I think my time is up. I really appreciate being able to speak on this bill.

**The Acting Speaker:** It being 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 1:30 p.m.

*The House adjourned at 1758.*



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No. 82A

N° 82A

ISSN 1180-2987

## Legislative Assembly of Ontario

Second Session, 38<sup>th</sup> Parliament

## Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

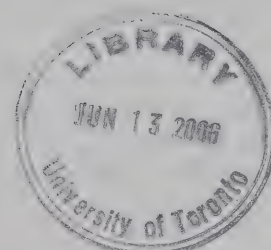
Deuxième session, 38<sup>e</sup> législature

# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

# Journal des débats (Hansard)

Wednesday 31 May 2006

Mercredi 31 mai 2006



Speaker  
Honourable Michael A. Brown

Président  
L'honorable Michael A. Brown

Clerk  
Claude L. DesRosiers

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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 31 May 2006

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 31 mai 2006

*The House met at 1330.*

*Prayers.*

### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

#### MINOR LEAGUE BASEBALL

**Mr. Toby Barrett (Haldimand–Norfolk–Brant):**

While this provincial government allowed the dispute in Caledonia/Six Nations to spiral out of control, young athletes have become collateral damage. The Six Nations Minor Baseball Association reports that athletes as young as five are missing out on their summer pastime as opposing teams are unwilling to show up.

As well, in a letter sent to coaches in the Haldimand Erie League, we read, "I know many people from both Six Nations and Caledonia are very upset about the way that this is affecting the relationship we have built up over the years. I would hope that all coaches would encourage their teams to participate and show some good sportsmanship." I certainly agree with that.

I've been receiving e-mails from people on all sides of this dispute, and I quote: "Six Nations has produced a lot of elite native athletes.... This is a time when elite athletes, native and non-native, could take a stand to promote good sportsmanship."

Nearly four years ago, I reported in the House that 180 athletes from Six Nations joined 6,500 other aboriginal athletes and coaches from across North America for the Indigenous Games. Things aren't quite so rosy right now, and the lack of leadership from the McGuinty government is a fact. I do call on community leaders, coaches and parents from all sides to rise above, to take a lead in promoting good sportsmanship and healthy competition among all athletes.

#### ARTS EDUCATION

**Mr. Mario G. Racco (Thornhill):** The Ontario government, under the leadership of Premier Dalton McGuinty, has invested nearly \$25 million to promote arts education. Arts education is beneficial to students, improving student motivation, better attendance and reduced dropout rates. Arts education fosters tolerance and respect for diversity and builds self-confidence. Furthermore, the outcomes of arts education—creativity, imagination, innovation and originality—are among the most important resources for economic prosperity in the 21st century.

Youth involvement in the arts is alive and well in my riding of Thornhill and Concord. The positive effects of arts education can be highlighted by the recent success of the St. Elizabeth Catholic High School band. They won first place at the Kiwanis Music Festival in February and qualified for MusicFest Canada, a national competition in Ottawa, and achieved silver standard at the intermediate level. Mr. John Lettieri, director of the school band, says that the members of the band couldn't be happier.

I commend the government of Ontario for investing in the arts so that organizations such as the St. Elizabeth Catholic High School band can continue to enrich the educational and life experience of all young Ontarians.

#### PHARMACISTS

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer (Kitchener–Waterloo):**

Today, a grassroots organization, the Coalition of Ontario Pharmacy, representing pharmacists, health groups and patients, held a rally attended by several hundred people from across Ontario to urge the Liberal McGuinty government to fix Bill 102, the Transparent Drug System for Patients Act. As currently drafted, the bill puts community pharmacy at risk and, as a result, the health and welfare of patients. Despite the fact that this group represents over 80% of pharmacy in Ontario, Minister Smitherman has refused to meet with them. So much for consultation or transparency.

People from across Ontario gathered today to express concern that if Bill 102 passes in its current form, some pharmacies will close, there will be a reduction in services, increased wait times for prescriptions and decreased accessibility to pharmacists. They gathered to urge the government to take the time to consult and understand the economics and the value of the important services that patients rely on every day and trust their pharmacist to deliver.

These pharmacists and patient and health groups came to Queen's Park today because they care about their patients, and they believe Bill 102 puts patient care at risk. Let's hope the McGuinty government also shows that they care about patients and brings in amendments to put patients first.

#### CANADIAN FEDERATION OF INDEPENDENT BUSINESS

**Mr. Michael Prue (Beaches–East York):** Today I rise to talk about the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, which are here today in the Legislature to meet



members of the provincial Legislature. Today is their 35th anniversary, and that's 35 years that they have been acting on behalf of their members and on behalf of the people of this country and this province.

It is a very diverse group that I met today, and in fact, the CFIB is a very diverse group in and of itself. They make up people from all walks of business. They can be restaurateurs, they can be manufacturers, they can be importers/exporters—literally anywhere that business can take people, the members will find themselves in the CFIB.

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They do wonderful work on behalf of their members. They're constantly doing surveys to find what their members think. They do analysis and present that analysis to all levels of government, including this one. They lobby on behalf of their members to make sure that politicians at all levels understand the needs of small and independent business. They are instrumental to new opportunities for development and growth. They are champions, I believe with all my heart, of tax reform and of the important contribution their many members make to the everyday life of Canadian society. Without them, it would be very difficult to organize and to have new jobs and new opportunities for people to work.

I salute them, and on behalf of the New Democratic Party we guarantee that we'll continue to work with them in the good work they do in our province.

### STRATFORD FESTIVAL LE FESTIVAL DE STRATFORD

**Mr. John Wilkinson (Perth-Middlesex):** Monday night, all the drama was on our world-famous Festival stage as the 54th season of the Stratford Festival launched with a wonderful production of *Coriolanus*, one of Shakespeare's great tragedies. I was delighted to be joined by Ontario's new Minister of Culture, the Honourable Caroline Di Cocco.

*Coriolanus* is an exciting production, featuring two of the finest Shakespearean actors in the world, Canada's own Colm Feore and Martha Henry.

Drawing audiences of more than 600,000 each year, the Stratford Festival, Ontario's third most popular tourist attraction, runs this season from April to November. This year's season features a wonderful array of 15 productions, including four by Shakespeare offered at four theatres.

Le gouvernement McGuinty soutient le tourisme culturel et les arts. J'ai eu beaucoup de plaisir à me joindre à la ministre Di Cocco pour annoncer que le gouvernement accordait un financement spécial de 105 000 \$ à la production canadienne de *Don Juan*, de Molière, du Festival de Stratford.

C'est la même troupe d'acteurs qui jouera la pièce en anglais et en français, et ce sera la première production bilingue de ce genre en 50 ans. Ce financement sera également utilisé pour encourager un nouveau partenariat

de créativité entre le Festival de Stratford et le Théâtre du Nouveau Monde de Montréal.

I invite all members and their constituents to visit the Stratford Festival of Canada this season, and I stand ready to assist them. Finally, I commend artistic director Richard Monette, executive director Antoni Cimolino and the entire festival family for creating yet another wonderful season.

### CANADIAN FEDERATION OF INDEPENDENT BUSINESS

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh (Halton):** Since 1971, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business has been a big voice for small business all across Canada, including the CFIB's 42,000 members here in Ontario.

This organization began in 1971, after the Benson budget came down and did a lot of disservice to independent business people. John Bullock, a son of a tailor in Toronto, organized the Canadian Federation of Independent Business and was involved with it for many years. It's now being run by Catherine Swift.

The Canadian Federation of Independent Business is a diverse organization speaking on behalf of its small business members from different sectors and communities across all of Ontario. I know that all members of this Legislature are aware of the tremendous work the CFIB staff undertake in keeping us aware of their members' concerns and interests through research and reports such as regular mandate surveys, the Quarterly Business Barometer and presentations to various standing committees, as well as the CFIB's comprehensive website.

Our leader, John Tory, and members of the Progressive Conservative caucus look forward to working with the Canadian Federation of Independent Business to ensure the continued growth and success of small business in Ontario. Congratulations on your 35th anniversary of providing a voice for Ontario's economic engine: small and medium-sized enterprises and the source of over 80% of jobs in this province. Congratulations on your history. Keep up the good work for the future.

### GREENHOUSE INDUSTRY

**Mr. Bruce Crozier (Essex):** I would like to welcome members of the Ontario Greenhouse Alliance, who are visiting us at the Legislature today. Formed in 2003, the alliance represents the largest cluster of greenhouse production in North America, and it's located right here in Ontario.

The greenhouse industry contributes \$4 billion per year to our province's economy. In Ontario there are over 1,200 greenhouse operations, most of which are concentrated in and around the ridings of Essex and Chatham-Kent Essex and the Niagara region.

Greenhouse operations in Ontario employ more than 19,000 people, with over 19 million square metres of greenhouses, bringing substantial benefit to rural economies.

The greenhouse industry is an export-driven industry, which contributes \$1.2 billion a year to Ontario's exports. Their competitive efficiency takes on the world marketplace and brings millions of new dollars into the Ontario economy, evidenced by the fact that it's one of the few sectors of agriculture to experience consistent, positive growth over the past decade.

Again, I welcome the Ontario Greenhouse Alliance to Queen's Park today, and remind members to stop by the legislative dining room this afternoon to meet some of their members and pick up a sample of their delicious vegetables and beautiful plants.

### CARASSAUGA

**Mr. Peter Fonseca (Mississauga East):** It is with great pride that I rise in the House today to speak about one of Mississauga's cultural institutions.

Every year, the city of Mississauga comes together to celebrate its diversity through Carassauga, Mississauga's festival of cultures. This event took place over the course of this past weekend, May 26 through 29.

This year there were 25 different countries represented at Carassauga, with cultural pavilions being held not only in my riding of Mississauga East, but across the fine city of Mississauga.

Pavilions feature a variety of activities to share the culture of their country of origin, including music, food, art, fashion shows, dance, storytelling, humorous skits and games. Visitors can purchase a Carassauga passport and visit the numerous pavilions, travelling through the world's cultures without ever leaving Mississauga.

This government recognizes that this province's rich strength is drawn from its rich diversity. Events such as Carassauga allow Ontarians of diverse backgrounds to celebrate their heritage and share it with others.

This year is Carassauga's 21st anniversary. I'd like to take a moment to commend and thank all the people that have volunteered or sponsored the event over the past two decades. Their tireless efforts and dedication have allowed generations of Mississaugans and Ontarians to learn about the culture and traditions of our global neighbours.

### SMOKE-FREE ONTARIO

**Ms. Deborah Matthews (London North Centre):** I'm proud to speak in the House today on the first day of a smoke-free Ontario.

This past Monday, I had the honour of presenting smoke-free awards at a ceremony at the Middlesex-London Health Unit, a ceremony that reaffirmed this government's commitment to having healthier people in a healthier province.

At the health unit in my riding of London North Centre, I presented a team of volunteers with the Heather Crowe Award and the Smoke Free Champions Award.

It was a especially meaningful for me to present the awards one week after the award's namesake, Heather

Crowe, passed away. Ms. Crowe was a trailblazing advocate for non-smoking and I'm sure she would be pleased to see her life's work continue today.

When I heard about the award nominations earlier in the year, my first thought was to nominate the technical implementation program for their work. I want to recognize the program's leadership and their tireless efforts that informed the city of London's anti-smoking bylaws. Thanks to the local-level and grassroots work of people like Heather Crowe Award winners Mary Lou Albanese, Patricia Coderre, Jon Coughlin, Dr. Stanley Hill, Harvey Katz, Don Lowry, Scott Mead, Frank Stilson, Rosemary Dickinson and Dr. Graham Pollett, we're breathing easier in a smoke-free Ontario today.

I'd also like to welcome a smoke-free champion, Janet McAlister, to the Legislature today.

### VISITORS

**Hon. Harinder S. Takhar (Minister of Small Business and Entrepreneurship):** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: It is my pleasure to ask members of the Legislature to join me in congratulating the Canadian Federation of Independent Business on their 35th anniversary and to welcome Judith Andrew, Ontario vice-president, Catherine Swift, Canadian president, and their colleagues from all over Canada. I had the pleasure of joining them for lunch today and I want to congratulate them for their tremendous work.

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### SPECIAL REPORT, OMBUDSMAN

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** I beg to inform the House that I have laid upon the table a report of the Ombudsman of Ontario made pursuant to section 21 of the Ombudsman Act relating to the Ontario disability support program's disability adjudication unit.

### REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

#### STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** I beg to inform the House that today the Clerk received the report on intended appointments dated May 31, 2006, of the standing committee on government agencies. Pursuant to standing order 106(e)9, the report is deemed to be adopted by the House.

### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

**Mr. Peter Tabuns (Toronto-Danforth):** With the consent of the House, I would like to introduce a bill on behalf of the member for Niagara Centre, Mr. Kormos.



**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Mr. Tabuns has asked for unanimous consent to present a bill to the House on behalf of the member for Niagara Centre. Agreed? Agreed.

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS  
AMENDMENT ACT  
(WAGE SECURITY), 2006  
LOI DE 2006 MODIFIANT LA LOI  
SUR LES NORMES D'EMPLOI  
(SÉCURITÉ SALARIALE)

Mr. Tabuns, on behalf of Mr. Kormos, moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 119, An Act to amend the Employment Standards Act, 2000 to provide for an Employee Wage Security Program / Projet de loi 119, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2000 sur les normes d'emploi afin d'établir un programme de sécurité salariale des employés.

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

The member may wish to make a brief statement.

**Mr. Peter Tabuns (Toronto-Danforth):** The intention of the bill is to provide replacement wages for those workers who have been denied their wages by an employer who has failed to live up to his commitments.

#### VISITORS

**Ms. Judy Marsales (Hamilton West):** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I'd like to welcome, in the members' gallery, Mr. David Shuttleworth, who is an advocate for Hamilton and a Hamiltonian as well as a radio personality with one of our local stations, K-Lite FM.

#### MOTIONS

##### PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

**Hon. James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, Government House Leader):** I seek unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding private members' public business.

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Mr. Bradley has asked for unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding private members' public business. Agreed? Agreed.

**Hon. Mr. Bradley:** I move that, notwithstanding standing order 96(d), the following change be made to the ballot list of private members' public business: Mr. Bisson and Mr. Prue exchange places in order of precedence such that Mr. Bisson assumes ballot item 57 and Mr. Prue assumes ballot item 42, and that, pursuant to standing order 96(g), notice be waived for ballot item 42.

**The Speaker:** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

#### HOUSE SITTINGS

**Hon. James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, Government House Leader):** I move that, pursuant to standing order 9(c)(i), the House shall meet from 6:45 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. on Wednesday, May 31, 2006, for the purpose of considering government business.

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All in favour will say "aye."

All opposed will say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1355 to 1400.*

**The Speaker:** All those in favour will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

#### Ayes

Amott, Ted	Fonseca, Peter	Phillips, Gerry
Arthurs, Wayne	Gerretsen, John	Pupatello, Sandra
Balkissoon, Bas	Gravelle, Michael	Qaadri, Shafiq
Barrett, Toby	Hardeman, Ernie	Racco, Mario G.
Bartolucci, Rick	Hoy, Pat	Ramal, Khalil
Bentley, Christopher	Jeffrey, Linda	Ramsay, David
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Kwinter, Monte	Runciman, Robert W.
Bountrogianni, Marie	Levac, Dave	Ruprecht, Tony
Bradley, James J.	MacLeod, Lisa	Sandals, Liz
Broten, Laurel C.	Marsales, Judy	Sergio, Mario
Cansfield, Donna H.	Martiniuk, Gerry	Smitherman, George
Caplan, David	Matthews, Deborah	Sorbara, Gregory S.
Chambers, Mary Anne V.	McMeekin, Ted	Sterling, Norman W.
Colle, Mike	McNeely, Phil	Takhar, Harinder S.
Crozier, Bruce	Milloy, John	Van Bommel, Maria
Delaney, Bob	Mitchell, Carol	Watson, Jim
Di Cocco, Caroline	Munro, Julia	Wilkinson, John
Dombrowsky, Leona	O'Toole, John	Witmer, Elizabeth
Duguid, Brad	Oraziotti, David	Wong, Tony C.
Elliott, Christine	Parsons, Ernie	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Patten, Richard	Zimmer, David

**The Speaker:** All those opposed will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

#### Nays

Bisson, Gilles	Marchese, Rosario	Prue, Michael
Horwath, Andrea	Martel, Shelley	Tabuns, Peter

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Claude L. DesRosiers):** The ayes are 63; the nays are 6.

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

#### STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

##### SMOKE-FREE ONTARIO UN ONTARIO SANS FUMÉE

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** The Minister of Health Promotion.

*Applause.*

**Hon. Jim Watson (Minister of Health Promotion):** Thank you—a one-man standing ovation.

Welcome to a smoke-free Ontario in the province of Ontario.

I rise in the House today to bring to the attention of all members that the Smoke-Free Ontario Act came into full effect at 12:01 a.m. this morning. It is very appropriate that this landmark piece of legislation should come into force today, the World Health Organization's World No Tobacco Day.

This legislation is the culmination of decades of work by volunteers and organizations who dedicated their efforts to raising awareness of the dangers relating to second-hand smoke.

Allow me to take a moment to thank the Honourable George Smitherman, who first introduced this piece of legislation a year and a half ago, and also Premier McGuinty, who ensured that this particular issue was raised in the last provincial election campaign. He was very clear, he stood on principle, he stood his ground, and we have the Smoke-Free Ontario Act because of Dalton McGuinty's leadership.

I also want to pay tribute to the many municipalities, municipal councillors, reeves, and mayors who over the years put forward their own no-smoking bylaws and ordinances in communities around the province.

Earlier today, on the lawn of the Legislature, our partners in a smoke-free Ontario brought their volunteers in from across the province, schoolchildren came to help us celebrate, and long-time advocates joined us to mark the day that their dedicated efforts brought about real change in Ontario.

The Smoke-Free Ontario Act is a landmark piece of legislation that protects workers and the public from the harmful effects of tobacco by banning smoking in enclosed public places and enclosed workplaces. It also strengthens laws on tobacco sales to minors and restricts the display of tobacco products in retail outlets.

We will see a complete ban on the retail display of tobacco products on May 31, 2008—the so-called power walls. I want to congratulate the honourable member from Ottawa—Orléans. It has now become the McNeely amendment as a result of making sure those power walls are going to be eliminated in 2008. This new law will make a positive and progressive difference in the health of all Ontarians.

Cette loi était nécessaire. La cigarette nuit à presque tous les organes corporels. L'usage du tabac—

**Mr. Norman W. Sterling (Lanark—Carleton):** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: From time to time, ministers wander from statements that they are required to provide members of the opposition. Members of the opposition allow that to happen if it doesn't happen on a very frequent basis. However, this minister insists on politicizing his minister's statement by glad-handing other members of his caucus and other ministers with regard to what they did. None of this is in the statement which the minister has provided to the opposition—

**The Speaker:** I want to thank the member for his point of order; it is a point of order. The Speaker does not have the benefit of knowing what is in a ministerial statement, but ministers need to follow the text that has been provided.

Minister.

**Hon. Mr. Watson:** I was about to get to the part where I congratulate Norm Sterling, so I'll have to leave that out.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. I just reminded the minister that he needs to keep to the text of the statement that has been provided to the opposition.

Minister.

**L'hon. M. Watson:** Monsieur le Président, l'usage du tabac est la première cause de décès évitables en Ontario. Chaque année, le tabac tue 16 000 personnes en Ontario. Il s'agit d'un décès toutes les 30 minutes.

Smoking also burdens the province economically. The cost to our local health care system is at least \$1.7 billion annually, and lost productivity due to tobacco-related illness accounts for a further \$2.6-billion loss for the economy.

When we ran for office in 2003, we made a commitment to Ontario that we would reduce tobacco consumption by 20% and make all workplaces and public places smoke-free. Our 20% target is within reach. Consumption rates, I'm pleased to report, have already dropped by about 10% since 2003.

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This act goes a long way to making Ontario a healthier place to live, work and raise a family, but it's only one part of our smoke-free strategy, which is amongst the toughest, most far-reaching and most comprehensive tobacco control strategies in North America. Like every jurisdiction that has taken this issue seriously, we have implemented the three pillars of an effective strategy: preventing youth from starting to smoke; protecting everyone from the negative effects of second-hand smoke; and helping smokers who wish to quit to achieve their goal.

Recently, our government increased funding for our smoke-free strategy for 2006-07 by \$10 million, for an annual investment of \$60 million. Since we took office, provincial support for tobacco control has increased sixfold. These investments will ensure that we have the capacity to enforce the smoke-free Ontario legislation. That is why we are increasing spending on enforcement to \$15.2 million.

We continue to encourage young people to not smoke. Again, so far, we have seen encouraging figures. Fully 67% of high-school-age students report that they've never even tried a cigarette; that's up 10% from just a year ago. If you don't try it, you can't get addicted; it's as simple as that. So we are adding \$3.3 million to our investment in local peer-based efforts by youth in their communities, bringing the total investment to \$8.8 million.

In fact, I was in A.Y. Jackson school yesterday, in Mr. Sterling's riding, listening to some of those young people speak about the good work they're doing in that community. We are also maintaining those parts of our program—public education, quitting support and other youth-based initiatives—that have proven successful in reducing smoking.



Avec le ministère de la Promotion de la santé, ce gouvernement fournit un centre de référence pour le secteur des soins de santé, y compris nos partenaires du secteur privé, afin d'empêcher les jeunes de commencer à fumer, d'encourager les fumeurs à arrêter, et d'aider ceux qui essaient d'arrêter de fumer à réussir.

In conclusion, we all have a role to play in reducing smoking rates and improving the health of Ontarians, and I'm proud to say that this government is doing its part.

Finally, I'm sad to note that one of the driving forces behind the Smoke-Free Ontario Act will not have the satisfaction of seeing it come into effect. Heather Crowe, as many of you know, passed away a little over a week ago of lung cancer. Heather contracted her cancer as a result of working for 40 years in smoke-filled restaurants. Her courageous battle to educate people about the dangers of second-hand smoke inspired this government to take action.

I'd like to ask this House for unanimous consent—and I believe discussions have taken place—to declare today, May 31, 2006, Heather Crowe Day in the province of Ontario.

**The Speaker:** Mr. Watson has asked for unanimous consent to declare today, May 31, Heather Crowe Day. Agreed? Agreed.

#### SENIORS' MONTH

**Hon. James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, Government House Leader):** I rise in the House today to mark an annual month-long tradition here in Ontario: Seniors' Month. For more than 20 years now, June is known as Seniors' Month, and communities across the province have hosted award ceremonies, information fairs, seminars and socials to honour older Ontarians. Mayors and reeves draft proclamations. Seniors' organizations roll out the community welcome mat. Members host or attend seniors' events in their own communities. Seniors' Month is our collective way of giving back, of acknowledging and thanking seniors for their tremendous contributions to their families, their communities and our great province.

I also have a message for Ontario seniors. To them I say, embrace the theme of Seniors' Month: active living; healthy living. Keeping healthy and fit is the key to maintaining a high quality of life as we age. It's never too late to start. Take a fitness class; join a walking club; plant a garden; volunteer.

Staying active is what more people are doing in their senior years. In a recent 10-kilometre run in Toronto, 35 seniors participated. One of them crossed the finish line in 40 minutes, 40 seconds. What is inspiring is that this person's time was better than many of the other participants who were 20 years younger. Of course, seniors do not have to run to live a healthy life. What is important is to stay active and involved.

There are about 1.5 million seniors in Ontario today. That number is expected to double to 3.2 million in the

next 20 years. While many Ontarians will remain strong, healthy and independent throughout their later years, others will need services to assist them. Our government is working on many levels to support seniors. We have increased the number of cataract surgeries by 16%, increased hip and knee replacement surgeries by 28%, passed legislation ending mandatory retirement, and invested an additional \$155 million in new funding this year for long-term-care homes, bringing the overall budget to \$2.84 billion for the fiscal year 2006-07.

To help communities promote Seniors' Month, each year we develop promotional materials, including a poster. To reach out to seniors from many cultural communities for the first time, the poster is available in 19 languages, including languages such as Arabic, Chinese, Vietnamese, Cree and Hindi.

In closing, I encourage all Ontarians to reach out to an older relative, neighbour, friend or colleague and thank them for making Ontario one of the best places in the world in which to live.

#### SMOKE-FREE ONTARIO

**Mr. Norman W. Sterling (Lanark-Carleton):** In response to the minister's statement regarding the Smoke-Free Ontario Act, I want to reiterate once again our caucus support for the goal of this legislation. I am proud to have been the first elected official in Canada to have presented a bill to protect workers and the public from second-hand smoke, in 1985, 21 years ago. Six other bills followed this particular act to push the then government to real action.

We do not, however, condone this government's treatment of people who are afflicted with this terrible addiction. We believe the same results could have been achieved without trying to make smokers social pariahs. We believe that some accommodation should have been made for our veterans and the elderly who cannot stop smoking. Retirement and long-term-care facilities that house our elderly should be given capital assistance to provide separately ventilated rooms for the residents who smoke.

We also believe that law-abiding business people who invested money in order to comply with the requirements of earlier municipal bylaws should be compensated for their losses.

We believe that as long as tobacco is a legal product, governments must be fair to those who produce, sell or use this terribly addictive substance. This government could have achieved the same results by being fair and accommodating to those who are affected by the decline and, hopefully, the demise of this product. This is the right result, but it has been done with little compassion or understanding for those who are affected.

On behalf of the PC caucus and our leader, John Tory, I also want to pay tribute to Heather Crowe for her efforts to protect workers from second-hand smoke in the workplace. As we all know, on May 22, Heather died of lung cancer that she got from breathing second-hand smoke in the restaurants where she worked. She was only



61 years old. Heather Crowe is a hero because she took a personal tragedy and used it to improve our society for everyone to follow. On behalf of our caucus, I want to express our condolences and sympathies to Heather's daughter, Patricia, her granddaughter, Jodie Ann, and her six brothers and sisters. I want to let them know just how proud they should be of their mother, grandmother and sister. She made a positive difference in the world. That is something that I believe we should all strive for in our lives.

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### SENIORS' MONTH

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod (Nepean–Carleton):** Today I'm delighted to recognize Seniors' Month on behalf of the PC Party of Ontario and our leader, John Tory. As the youngest member of this Legislature, I think it is fitting that I'm able to speak to Ontario's many seniors today and thank them on behalf of my generation for building a strong and vibrant province that makes us proud to call home.

Last week, in my own community of Nepean–Carleton, I was honorary chair of the annual Nepean Seniors' Walk for Independence, where hundreds of seniors celebrated their contributions to our province while also creating awareness for their cause, which is to ensure that seniors are able to live as independently as possible, with the supports they need.

Throughout Ontario there are other organizations, like Nepean Seniors' Home Support, that strive to make life easier for our seniors. They offer programs like Meals on Wheels, grocery delivery, respite care, breakfast clubs and transportation to doctors' appointments, among others. These organizations value the great work seniors in Ontario have done, whether it was their work on the farm, their foresight in building our institutions or their ardent defence of our freedom during both world wars.

These institutions, like me and my caucus colleagues, believe our seniors deserve the respect they have so dutifully and rightfully earned; yet when it comes to seniors, the record of the McGuinty Liberals is absolutely shameful. Just two weeks ago, 21 members of the McGuinty Liberal caucus stood in this House and voted against my resolution calling for the elimination of the illegitimate health tax on seniors—the Liberal broken-promise health tax. Not one of them had the courage of their convictions to stand with us on this side of the House to properly thank our seniors. That's how the Liberals thank seniors.

During the 2003 campaign, the McGuinty Liberals promised \$6,000 in care for every resident in a long-term-care home. The result? We have a bunch of people running around these homes counting how many seniors are falling down, but there's nobody around to pick the seniors up off the floor. That's how the Liberal government thanks—

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Thank you.  
*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. I can wait.

### SMOKE-FREE ONTARIO

**Ms. Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt):** In response to the statement made by the Minister of Health Promotion, I'm reminded that, long before Bill 164 ever saw the light of day, the city of greater Sudbury, in conjunction with the Sudbury and District Health Unit, many health care professionals and many health-care-related organizations and agencies, passed the necessary bylaw to go 100% smoke-free in community workplaces and public spaces. I was pleased to be at Tom Davies Square on the day the bylaw was passed to demonstrate my support for all those who had worked so hard to get to this point and to congratulate them on their vision and determination.

The city of greater Sudbury wasn't the only municipality that did this kind of work. Many municipalities had a gold standard with respect to a smoke-free bylaw in place and passed long before Bill 164 was ever tabled. So, in many respects, it was those many municipalities in Ontario that really led the way in convincing their own public of the dangers of second-hand smoke and in passing the necessary bylaws to have 100% smoke-free workplaces and smoke-free public places, and I congratulate those many municipalities.

However, the government missed a golden opportunity in Bill 164 to really prevent youth from starting to smoke in the first place. We heard time and time again during the course of the public hearings from health care professionals, from health units, from health organizations, from young people themselves, that behind-the-counter displays of cigarettes had to be banned as soon as possible. Young people said that seeing row upon row of cigarettes behind the counter or on the counter in their local retail store made smoking seem normal, made smoking seem okay, and the retail displays had to be reduced because that was the single biggest factor in enticing them to smoke in the first place.

That's why, during the committee, I moved an amendment on behalf of the NDP to ban countertop and behind-the-counter retail displays of tobacco products by today, May 31, 2006. It is regrettable that the Liberal members on the committee voted against that amendment, because that would have put into place the very election promise they made. No one suspected, when the Liberals said they would ban countertop displays, that that meant in 2008. People believed that that would come as part of a package when the whole bill was passed.

The Liberals' delay in banning countertop displays of cigarettes in retail stores will mean that thousands and thousands of young people will start smoking in the next two years, will be addicted to cigarettes in the next two years and will become the cancer statistics in our province 20 years from now. The government missed a golden opportunity. The government should have done that. It would have been the single most important thing to do to stop young people from starting to smoke in the first place.



## SENIORS' MONTH

**Ms. Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt):** With respect to the statement made by the minister responsible for seniors, on behalf of New Democrats we recognize the start of Seniors' Awareness Month. We salute those seniors whose past working lives and volunteer lives have made an enormous contribution to the social and cultural fabric of our province. We are in debt to these many seniors for their past accomplishments and for the current work they do in so many volunteer organizations, so that the province is richer as a result of their efforts.

But I would be remiss if I didn't put on the public record a presentation made to the government in October 2005 from the United Senior Citizens of Ontario Inc., a list of many recommendations for the government to follow with respect to seniors' concerns. I'll just deal with the health ones.

Delisting of services: "The United Senior Citizens of Ontario implore the Ontario government to re-examine these issues."

With respect to P3 hospitals: "The USCO calls on the Premier and his government to immediately put an end to all P3 hospitals in the province of Ontario."

With respect to the health care premium: "The government of Ontario must re-examine this tax. It is wrong, and the USCO strongly urges the government to withdraw this punitive tax."

With respect to standards of care in long-term-care facilities: "The UCSO speaks out forcefully to the government to set strict guidelines that long-term-care homes must follow, increasing the number of nursing care hours for each resident to a minimum of 3.5 hours per day and providing stable funding to ensure quality care for all Ontario residents of long-term-care homes."

I would encourage the government to live up to the election promise that was made—here it is—to ensure that residents get more personal care to invest in better nursing care and provide an additional \$6,000 in care for every resident.

## VISITEURS

## VISITORS

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** On a point of order, the member for Ottawa–Orléans.

**M. Phil McNeely (Ottawa–Orléans):** Monsieur le Président, je suis heureux de reconnaître en haut, dans la tribune du Président, deux hommes distingués de ma circonscription d'Ottawa–Orléans: premièrement M. Marc Godbout, ancien député fédéral, et M. Gérald Poulin, un homme qui a travaillé très fort depuis quelques années pour bâtir Orléans.

**M. Gilles Bisson (Timmins–Baie James):** Monsieur le Président, je voudrais reconnaître deux collègues de Timmins: M. Pierre Bélanger, qui est récipiendaire cette année, et M. Sylvain Lacroix, qui était récipiendaire en 2004. Bienvenue.

**Hon. David Ramsay (Minister of Natural Resources, minister responsible for aboriginal affairs):** I'd like to introduce to the members of the Legislature today, in the members' east gallery, a very dignified delegation from the town of Cobalt, which everybody knows is the silver capital of the world, and to extend an invitation to everyone to come to committee room 2 and join the historic mining camp celebration. We have André Bélanger, the mayor of the corporation of the town of Cobalt; Gino Chitaroni, chair of the Historic Cobalt Corp.; Doug Shearer, project manager of the Historic Cobalt Mining Camp project; Melissa Ruddy, marketing and outreach officer for the Historic Cobalt Mining Camp project; Helen Culhane, welcome centre manager; and Pat Anderson, committee member.

**The Speaker:** We have with us in the Speaker's gallery the 2006 recipients of the internationally recognized Ordre de la Pléiade. These men and women will be honoured today by the Ontario branch for Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie for their outstanding contributions to French-language communities in the province. The ceremony will be held in the Lieutenant Governor's suite later today.

The recipients are: Pierre Bélanger, Denyse Boulanger Culligan, Christine Dumitriu van Saanen, Gérald Poulin, Bernard Thibodeau and Marc Godbout. Please join me in welcoming our guests.

1430

## FRED BURR

**Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora–Rainy River):** I believe we have unanimous consent for a member from each party to speak for up to five minutes in tribute to Fred Burr, a former member of the Legislature.

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Agreed? Agreed.

**Mr. Hampton:** I think I'm one of the fortunate members here who actually got to know Fred Burr. I was not elected when Fred Burr was a member of the Legislature, but at that time I used to come over and do some volunteer work for some other members. Fred Burr was, to be very plain about it, the kind of constituency politician that all of us wish we could be, and he was the kind of thoughtful spokesperson that all of us wish we could be.

It's not very often that a columnist like Norman Webster of the Globe and Mail would write a column just about the work of one backbencher. But in 1974, the Globe and Mail columnist Norman Webster did just that. It was entitled "An Unusual Politician."

He starts out by saying, "Fred Burr is good for the soul. Every House should have one. Quietly, patiently, with little obvious partisanship, the NDP member from Windsor pokes around in corners that the big political noses overlook, then asks a question in the Legislature."

"Sometimes the question makes such plain good sense that it seems far out in our damn-the-consequences society. A sampler of Mr. Burr's concerns:



"Why aren't we spending at least a small fraction of the enormous outlays on oil and gas for research into ways to use solar energy?" He asked that question in 1974.

Another sample of the questions he asked: "Experiments in Hong Kong indicate acupuncture can help cure heroin addicts. Has anybody here noticed?"

Another question: "Is anybody doing anything about Freon, the inert gas that powers aerosol cans? One million tons of the gas are being released annually and, rising slowly, may eventually destroy the earth's ozone layer." He was somebody who was probably 20 years ahead of his time.

I wonder how many members of the Legislature can speak Greek and Latin. In fact, Fred Burr spoke Greek and Latin, often spoke Greek and Latin in the Legislature, and was often quoted.

Sometimes he was a bit embarrassing to some other members. At one time, there was a committee called the land drainage committee. The land drainage committee decided they were going to hold their next meeting in West Palm Beach, Florida. Fred Burr said no. He couldn't see how the people of Ontario would derive any benefit out of a legislative committee holding its meetings in West Palm Beach, Florida.

Fred Burr has also established some interesting history. One of the things that he enjoyed doing in his spare time was cross-propagating iris flowers and creating new varieties. So today, if you go to Coventry garden in England, you'll find a Fred Burr iris; or if you go to the botanical gardens in Hamilton you'll find some of the irises that he experimented with, or if you go to Florence, Italy—I wonder how many members of the Legislature had that kind of interest that is being remembered now, internationally around the world.

Fred Burr served in the Legislature from 1967 to 1977. He was noted as being a very quiet individual but, as you can tell from the questions he asked, a very thoughtful individual; an individual at least 20 years ahead of his time.

Another event he was responsible for, to the embarrassment of some other members: He sat on a committee and insisted in the committee that smoking should not happen. When other members of the committee said to him, "Why do you take this approach?" he said that this is "the most intense form of air pollution" that we know of. By simply proposing the idea, he won the day, again, 30 years ahead of his time.

Members of the Burr family are here with us today, and on behalf of New Democrats, I can say we're very proud that Fred Burr was a member of the New Democratic caucus. We're very proud of the contribution that he made not only to this Legislature but to Ontario in general, and to some interesting things that are happening now around the world. Fred Burr was indeed ahead of his time. His thinking was indeed 20 years ahead of his time. We're very proud that someone like that has served in the Ontario Legislature.

**Mr. Norman W. Sterling (Lanark–Carleton):** On behalf of the Progressive Conservative caucus and our

leader John Tory, I'm pleased to rise to pay tribute to Fred Burr, who died January 17 of this year, just prior to his 95th birthday.

Jim Bradley and I were first elected here in 1977, I did have the pleasure of meeting Fred after the election and was impressed by just how easy he was to meet, how wonderful he was to talk to. I really did like Fred Burr.

Fred was the NDP MPP for Sandwich–Riverside and Windsor–Riverside from 1967 to 1977. While his tenure in the House wasn't that many years ago, we're still discussing today many of the issues Mr. Burr raised, as the leader of the third party has pointed out.

The fact that we are paying tribute to Mr. Burr today is very, very fitting, as the leader pointed out. Fred was very much interested in the second-hand-smoke issue.

Today, the Smoke-free Ontario Act came into force to protect workers from second-hand smoke. On November 24, 1975—this was the year the World Health Organization first recognized that smoking was such a peril to our health—Fred Burr spoke about the dangers of second-hand smoke, although he referred to it at that time as side-stream smoke.

In this debate, Mr. Burr went on to describe the toxin levels of side-stream smoke. Then he pitched an idea for an anti-smoking poster. I quote, and this is from Hansard: "I should like to see a poster designed to show that children need protection. I visualize such a poster as showing a parent, male or female, with an infant in a high chair. Between them, balanced on the edge of an ashtray, would be a cigarette, burning at rest with its smoke drifting towards the child's face. The baby's thoughts would be shown in some such words as these: 'I wish he would smoke it himself. How long before my cute, pink lungs turn ugly black? Do I need this carbon monoxide? Can my lungs tolerate this cadmium?'"

That's the kind of common sense that Fred Burr continued to put forward as a representative in this House. Mr. Burr brought to this House a great interest in public welfare. He expressed concerns with, as you heard, a great deal of imagination, and he supported his concerns with strong research. He did what the opposition is intended to do in our legislative tradition: He raised issues that he felt were important, and time has shown that his sense of what was important was right on target.

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Fred Burr came to this place after a long career as a high school teacher at Walkerville Collegiate, where he taught Latin and Greek for 34 years. He was obviously dedicated to his students because, after his obituary appeared in the *Globe and Mail*, a former student, now living in Saskatoon, wrote, "He was a teacher's teacher who made Latin and Greek easy to study and learn." He must have been a really good teacher, Mr. Speaker.

His dedication also extended to his public life. Fred ran in five provincial and federal elections before winning in 1967 by 799 votes. In the next provincial election, he won by 10,000 votes. According to a story in the *Owen Sound Sun Times*, Mr. Burr's dedication to our democratic process remained until the end. Before he



died, he voted in the advance poll for the January federal election.

He also passed his dedication on to his late son, David, who served as mayor of Windsor from 1986 to 1988.

I believe that, as MPPs, we could all learn something from Fred Burr. In 1974, he was quoted in the *Globe and Mail* as saying, "I don't believe in asking questions just to get publicity. The question should have some potential for correcting a situation or improving a situation or preventing a situation. A question in the House should have some social value, rather than a political or partisan motivation."

From what I have read, Mr. Burr lived by that and, as a result, he managed to correct or improve various different situations. He made Ontarians more aware of the environment. Ontario's first Minister of the Environment, the Honourable George Kerr from Burlington, credited Mr. Burr with forcing the creation of the new ministry in 1975.

In 1997, Fred's late wife, Dorothy, told the *Toronto Star* that her husband had three main accomplishments during his life at Queen's Park. They were persuading the government to start an organ and tissue donation program, leading the non-smokers' rights movement, and exposing environmental hazards such as mercury in the St. Clair River.

Fred Burr used polite, well-researched questions to raise important issues, and the changes that resulted from his questions are evidence that we don't have to be partisan or aggressive to succeed. Mr. Burr used his position in the House to improve Ontario, and he did it without compromising his integrity. If every one of us in this House today can have that said of us when our turn comes to be remembered here, we should be proud.

On behalf of our caucus, I want to extend our heartfelt sympathy to Fred's daughters, Maureen and Sheila. I want to thank them for sharing their dad with us and all Ontarians.

**Hon. James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, Government House Leader):** On behalf of the government and members of the Liberal caucus, I would like to join in paying tribute to Fred Burr for his many years of service to the people of the province of Ontario, particularly those in the ridings he represented in the Windsor area.

Much has been said, most appropriately and accurately, by our two previous speakers from the New Democratic Party and the Conservative Party about the fact that Fred Burr was a man ahead of his time, a man who genuinely had an impact on issues confronting us over the years, confronting us even today. Mr. Sterling made reference to a few of those issues in his remarks.

You think of the fact that this year we've had at least three different bills in the Legislature talking about organ donation. That was not the topic of the day when Fred Burr was a member of the Ontario Legislature. He was a person ahead of his time on that particular issue.

Most appropriately today, being the day that smoking has ended in Ontario in public places, I remember the

early crusaders for no smoking even in designated areas. They were often ridiculed. They were often dismissed as eccentrics and unrealistic people. Well, Fred Burr wasn't afraid in those days to raise those issues, because he recognized the terrible impact of tobacco smoking on people in the province and, I think, particularly younger people.

I notice that the police forces across Ontario mention that they were carrying out a crackdown on seat belts. If you said anything about seat belts back in those days—it was an infringement upon your freedom to force somebody to wear a seat belt. Today we take it for granted, and I particularly admire young people today who automatically, when they get into a vehicle, pull on a seat belt. It's a little more difficult for those of us who didn't grow up with that; however, we do it. Again, that would have been considered on the far side in those days, and really came about as an important issue and something adopted by the government.

As Minister of the Environment, I can think of all the times that I relied upon, and governments relied upon, people who really cared about the environment and who were prepared to raise issues. Who talked about mercury in the fish in the St. Clair River? Well, it was none other than Fred Burr. I know, when I had the privilege of being environment minister from 1985 to 1990, what we were talking about: contaminants in the St. Clair River. Everybody has tried to address those issues, but it's because people such as Fred Burr were prepared to raise those issues—and his advocacy of solar power and so on.

Whenever one of these days arises when we're paying tribute to somebody, I go to my favourite source, Eric Dowd, who is the dean in the press gallery. He sits above us, looking down upon us. I was reading one of his columns, and it said the following:

"The first MPP to suggest wind power could help solve Ontario's energy shortage was almost laughed out of the Legislature.

"This is hard to believe now, when turbines to harness wind are sprouting up faster than corn in many areas of the province and are generally acknowledged to be a useful part of future electricity resources."

He goes on to say that, at the time when he raised this in the Legislature, there was regaling of him, of course. There was laughter out there constantly, and a lot of ridicule and diminishing of his suggestions. He continued to pursue it, and that's not surprising because, remember, Fred Burr ran six times before he was elected. It reminds me of my good friend Mel Swart, who ran eight times in the Niagara Peninsula before he was elected. But Fred Burr ran for the CCF twice federally and for the NDP four different times for the Ontario Legislature. So he was persistent.

I think Mr. Dowd captured, probably most appropriately, what ultimately came about. He said:

"Burr had the last laugh, because he lived to see wind power gain acceptance by later governments of all parties.

"Ontario now has 200 wind turbines and eventually wind will supply at least 10% of its electricity.



"But Ontario still is behind some other jurisdictions, particularly Quebec, in using wind power.

"One lesson" from all of this "is that you shouldn't put all your trust in the smart, young, confident-sounding guys in government. They don't know everything."

Well, Fred wasn't classified as one of those individuals. He is as described. He was a wonderful member of this Legislature, a great constituency person. His family, represented here today and perhaps watching and receiving the Hansard from this House, can be justifiably proud of the contribution that he made not only to his own riding but to the people of this province and this country.

**The Speaker:** I'd like to thank all members for their kind remarks, and I undertake to see that the family receives copies of today's Hansard.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### ELECTRICITY SUPPLY

**Mr. Robert W. Runciman (Leeds–Grenville):** I have a question for the Acting Premier. Yesterday, it became glaringly obvious that the McGuinty government has broken yet another of its key election promises.

Minister, try as you and the Premier might to rid yourself of the promise-breaker label, you just can't seem to be straight with Ontarians when it comes to promises and commitments, even the new ones you made only a few months ago.

Knowing the electricity supply situation that exists, why did your minister and your Premier continue to promise and re-promise that the coal plants would be shut down, taking no action to reduce emissions, if you knew full well it was never going to happen?

**Hon. Leona Dombrowsky (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs):** I think it is important and I'm happy to have the opportunity to clarify for the honourable member that our government is absolutely committed to replacing coal. That is a commitment we made and that is a commitment that remains in place. We inherited a mess from the government he was a part of; there's no question about that. In the last decade, let me remind the honourable member, demand for energy increased in the province by 8.5%, and on your watch, supply actually decreased by 6.5%. Our government has a plan to keep the lights on and a plan to replace coal.

1450

**Mr. Runciman:** That's getting to be a pretty tired refrain, your continuing efforts to play Ontarians for fools with one subterfuge after another. I've asked you a straight question. You refuse to answer. The truth is, Minister, you and your government have done absolutely nothing to clean up Ontario's coal plants. The last scrubbers to be installed were by the PC government in 2003. So again, you're refusing to be straight with Ontarians about the facts. We've asked your government

repeatedly to invest in cleaning them up, and all we've gotten is pushback about how it would be a waste of time and money to invest in plants that are going to be shut down.

Minister, will you commit here today to immediately take action and invest in cleaning up our coal plants with advanced scrubber technology?

**Hon. Mrs. Dombrowsky:** I would say to the honourable member that when he talks about cleaning up coal, that's like making cigarettes safe, and we know that's not possible. Our government is committed to replacing coal for the health of Ontarians.

I want to remind the honourable member too that with respect to the scrubbers he talks about, scrubbers don't do anything to remove these carcinogens. They don't remove arsenic, scrubbers don't remove beryllium, scrubbers don't remove chromium, they don't remove cadmium, and that is what is killing people in the province of Ontario. That is why we are committed to replacing coal. You're the party that wants to keep coal burning in the province. Our government is committed to the health and well-being of the people of this province, and that is why we remain committed to replacing coal here.

**Mr. Runciman:** It's interesting that you hear the minister with her response on probably the worst smog day we've seen in this city in years. What we really have here is Liberals breaking a promise that's already been broken.

The way Ontarians see it there are only two possible explanations for this promise being made and now being broken twice over. The first explanation is that your Premier was so out of touch that he never did his homework to find out what everyone else knew already: that this promise was completely unachievable. The second explanation and the most sinister—but in light of other broken promises is probably the one that makes the most sense—is that your Premier knew all along that the coal promise was unachievable, yet he made it anyway in order to score votes in the last election. That's also known as fraud. Minister, which is it?

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** I'd ask the member to withdraw the last phrase.

**Mr. Runciman:** I respect your request, Mr. Speaker, and withdraw it.

**Hon. Mrs. Dombrowsky:** Let me remind the honourable member about what we have done so far to keep our commitment to replace coal. We have already closed Lakeview. We have already reduced the reliance on coal in this province by 17%. We have already reduced mercury emissions by 28%. We've reduced SO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 28%, NO<sub>x</sub> by 34% and CO<sub>2</sub> by 15%. Those are real results for the people of Ontario. We have also brought new power online in Ontario, clean, renewable power: 3,000 megawatts of new power, and 11,000 are in the works. That's far beyond anything you did when you were sitting on this side of the House. We're doing it to save the lives of Ontarians. We're committed to doing that.



**The Speaker:** New question.

**Mr. Runciman:** To the Acting Premier: again, an energy issue. Apparently, the Minister of Energy doesn't have the intestinal fortitude to show up here today, given the—

**The Speaker:** We would know that you cannot refer to a member's absence or presence here in the Legislature. I'd ask you to withdraw that.

**Mr. Runciman:** I withdraw it, sir.

Minister, your coal plant promise is no different from your promise not to raise taxes. Less than two weeks before the 2004 budget, Dalton McGuinty was still promising that he was not going to raise taxes, knowing full well what his budget already looked like. Since you came to office, you've promised over and over again that you would close these plants, knowing full well that it couldn't be done on your timeline. There's a big difference between breaking promises, which we know you have no problem doing, and wilfully failing to be straight with Ontarians.

Minister, could you please explain why your government has continued to claim you were moving forward on this promise when you knew full well that it was not going to happen?

**Hon. Mrs. Dombrowsky:** I'm happy to have the opportunity to respond, but I think it's really unfortunate that, when our Minister of Energy is attending a funeral of a friend, there is a suggestion on the other side of the House that he's somehow not looking to do his job. That is really incredible.

With respect to the commitment of our government, we have been straight with the people of Ontario. I would remind the honourable member that we have told the people of Ontario, with respect to coal plants, that operating coal plants cost the people of Ontario \$4.4 billion. Dollars notwithstanding, let me remind the honourable member as well, because we're straight with the people of Ontario, that when we keep coal plants open—I know that the members of the opposition discount these numbers, but let me assure you that they are very real. Keeping our coal plants open costs 668 premature deaths, 928 hospital admissions, 1,100 emergency room visits and 333,000 minor—

**The Speaker:** Thank you, Minister. Supplementary?

**Mr. Runciman:** Taking lessons from the Liberals on appropriate behaviour in this assembly is laughable. We see it every day.

This is a question about trust and confidence. You promised to replace 25% of the province's energy supply in three years. Now you whine and cry about the legal hurdles and regulations that have gotten in your way. These are obstacles that everyone but you seemed to know you would eventually run into.

Minister, Ontarians expect you to be up front and honest about your promises and the reality they are based upon. Ontarians expect the truth about the energy plan, or lack thereof, and they expect it to be based on expert opinion, not partisan spin and irresponsible promises. When will you and Mr. McGuinty finally be forthcoming

about your plan for electricity in Ontario? With a 55% increase to hydro bills under your watch, I think the people of Ontario deserve that.

**Hon. Mrs. Dombrowsky:** I think that it's very obvious that this government has taken the energy file very seriously, unlike what you did when you were in government. There was no new capacity, in spite of the fact that demand rose. What the people of Ontario need to remember is that when we came to government, we inherited a system that required the transmission to be upgraded; that comes at a significant cost. We inherited a system where there had been no investment in conservation; we are doing that. We inherited a system where there were no new renewables coming online; we have turned that around. We inherited a system where we are committed to implementing cleaner gas plants—something the New Democrats have opposed every step of the way.

Those are the things we are doing, as a government, because we believe the people of Ontario need a sound plan that will enable us to replace coal-fired generation—

**The Speaker:** Thank you. Final supplementary.

1500

**Mr. Runciman:** Here's the reality behind your broken promises and phony plan. Consumption and demand records have been set and reset so many times under your government that no one can keep count anymore. Your conservation strategies are totally inadequate. The plants you hoped would help replace coal power are mired in legal battles and red tape, and are going to be nowhere near finished by the 2007 deadline. Your own people at the OPA have confirmed that. Your wind farms are operating at only 10% capacity, and, despite Ontarians paying roughly 55% more for electricity under your watch, they're still being asked to turn off their lights and toaster ovens or the province may plunge into darkness.

Minister, where is your plan? Where's your response to the OPA report after 173 days? When will we see an end to broken promises and incompetence and, finally, see a plan from you and Premier McGuinty?

**Hon. Mrs. Dombrowsky:** It's really rich that the member from Leeds–Grenville can stand in his place today and ask for a plan when for eight years you were on this side of the House and you had no plan. Now you're looking for a plan.

Well, let me tell you: Yes, the minister has received the OPA report. I also want to say that what we have been asked by the public and members of the opposition is that the minister consider that report very carefully. That report has been made public and, so far, we have received over 5,000 responses. The minister is in the process of reviewing them very carefully, and he will be announcing his response to that very soon.

## ENERGY CONSERVATION

**Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora–Rainy River):** My question is for the Acting Premier. Acting Premier, working families across Ontario—southern and central On-



tario for sure—see a long summer of smog ahead, and they're deeply concerned because polluted air will cause the premature deaths of 5,800 people and send thousands more to the emergency room. Yesterday, unbelievable as it may sound, your energy minister refused to read out Dalton McGuinty's promise to shut coal plants—a promise you have now broken not once but twice. Maybe you can do a little better today, Acting Premier.

Can you please read to us Dalton McGuinty's promise about reducing electricity consumption, and can you tell us, is this another promise you're going to break?

**Hon. Mrs. Dombrowsky:** Again, I can say to the leader of the third party and to the people of Ontario that our government is committed to cleaning our air by replacing coal generation, and we are committed to keeping the lights on. We have inherited a tremendous challenge; there's no question about it. The government before us did absolutely nothing to invest in new generation to meet our growing need, but our government is absolutely committed to doing what we need to do. We have brought 3,000 new megawatts online, 11,000 are in the works, and we are working very hard to ensure that in a safe and reliable way we continue to keep the lights on for the people of Ontario.

**Mr. Hampton:** What a surprise. I even highlighted the promise for her—yet another promise that McGuinty Liberals made so prominently—and now they won't repeat it.

Here's the promise: "We will help Ontario homes and businesses cut their electricity consumption at least by 5% by 2007." But, in fact, under the McGuinty government's watch, Ontario has recorded nine of the top 10 days in electricity consumption in the province's history, and just yesterday, Ontario set a new record for electricity consumption during the month of May: 25,000 megawatts.

Minister, can you tell me, how is Dalton McGuinty's promise to cut Ontario's electricity consumption by 5%, to reduce our reliance on coal and to turn to clean air anything more than another McGuinty broken promise?

**Hon. Mrs. Dombrowsky:** Well, isn't it interesting that the member of the third party has had an epiphany, because when they were in government, they cancelled every cent that was going to conservation in the province of Ontario. That's what you did, and now you're preaching conservation. I'm happy to remind you, through the Speaker, that this is what we are doing to build a conservation culture in the province of Ontario. We believe that every kilowatt hour that is saved is one we don't have to bill. We are providing a \$500 rebate with every purchase of an Energy-Star-rated central air-conditioner, a \$50 rebate for a tune-up of an existing air conditioner and a \$75 rebate for the installation of programmable thermostats. Smart meters are being placed in over 800,000 homes, and \$1.5 billion in conservation initiatives have been planned. This is in contrast to when you were in government, leader of the third party. You spent zero on conservation. That's what our government is—

**The Speaker:** Thank you, Minister. Final supplementary.

**Mr. Hampton:** It says a lot about the McGuinty government. They promised to reduce electricity consumption by 5%, electricity consumption is going through the roof, and they want to attack governments that were here 10 and 15 years ago and say they're somehow responsible.

I want to read, for the minister, the other promise that Dalton McGuinty made: "We will introduce effective programs to encourage residents to reduce their home energy consumption. At the same time, we will work with commercial and institutional customers, especially hospitals, schools, colleges and universities, to lower their electricity use."

Minister, your government has held all kinds of photo ops and we see your superficial ads on television, but electricity consumption isn't coming down. Under the McGuinty government, electricity consumption is going through the roof, just like hydro rates.

Minister, tell us how that's not a broken promise.

**Hon. Mrs. Dombrowsky:** I will explain the realities of economics. I know that it wasn't his experience when he was in government, but we happen to be governing at a time when the economy is booming. What happens when the economy is booming is that we have more industries and businesses coming to our province, and we have more people coming here to live. That puts a greater demand on our electricity system. This is something that we're very happy to have happen; there's no question about that. The previous government did not plan for this economic boom, so we are now working with Ontarians, providing them with information around how they can conserve and help us so we can keep the lights on for the people of Ontario.

#### ONTARIO DISABILITY SUPPORT PROGRAM

**Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** Acting Premier, I think the lesson we draw is: If the economy booms, the McGuinty government thinks they can break all their promises.

Today, the Ombudsman delivered another scathing report about how the McGuinty government is taking advantage of Ontario's most vulnerable citizens. The report, *Losing the Waiting Game*, reveals that Ontario's disabled citizens have not received \$6 million in much-needed benefits because of bureaucratic bungling at the Ministry of Community and Social Services. The Ombudsman uses these words to describe the situation: "cruel," "insensitive," "shameful," "unjust," "no commitment to restitution," "morally repugnant."

Acting Premier, how could the McGuinty government take such cruel and shameful advantage of the disabled in Ontario?

**Hon. Leona Dombrowsky (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs):** The Minister of Community and Social Services.

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur (Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for franco-**



**phone affairs):** First of all, let me thank the Ombudsman for his work and for his acknowledgement that we, as a government, made some progress on this file.

This issue has existed almost since the legislation was first brought in, in 1997, under the Harris government. This government is committed to helping our most vulnerable citizens. We take this matter seriously, and we are already implementing most of the Ombudsman's recommendations.

I am proud to say that we have eliminated the four-month limit on retroactive payments. This means that people deemed eligible for ODSP will receive financial assistance as of the time they apply and we have received a complete application.

I'll continue my response in the supplementary.

1510

**Mr. Hampton:** There's a very troubling double standard here. This is the same government that awards its hydro executives half-million-dollar bonuses but, at the same time that you award the Tom Parkinsons half-million-dollar bonuses, 4,630 disabled Ontarians are denied \$6 million in benefits they are legally entitled to.

I agree with the Ombudsman: What the McGuinty government has done over the last three years is cruel, it's shameful, and it is morally repugnant. My question is this: How does the McGuinty government justify your double standard of half-million-dollar bonuses for your hydro executives while you treat the disabled in such a shameful, repugnant way?

**Hon. Mrs. Meilleur:** The previous government broke the system, and this government is fixing it. We're going to do the fair and the right things for those who got caught in the broken system we inherited.

My staff is working right now with the Ministry of Finance, and we will report back on what we will be accomplishing. As the Ombudsman pointed out, the previous government set up a system that didn't work and didn't keep records. It will take some time to fix it. I have to say that out of the seven recommendations, we have four that we have already implemented. We are working on the other three and will be reporting back in six months, as the Ombudsman asked us to do.

**Mr. Hampton:** Gee, thank God the Ombudsman blew the whistle on the McGuinty government after three years; otherwise, I'm sure this would have continued.

But I want to ask you about a particular recommendation by the Ombudsman, because I believe that no disabled citizen of Ontario, no disabled citizen of this wealthy province, should be denied the much-needed benefits they're legally entitled to because of bureaucratic bungling by the McGuinty government. The Ombudsman has recommended that you pay restitution to those people who have been denied the \$6 million in benefits they are legally entitled to. Will you commit today to enacting immediately the Ombudsman's recommendation not only to clean up the mess but to pay the restitution to these people who are legally entitled to that money?

**Hon. Mrs. Meilleur:** I said in my previous answer that we are working on reviewing the recommendations

of the Ombudsman. The Ombudsman gave us six months to report back to him on what we're going to do.

We are working with the Ministry of Finance. We have already eliminated the four-month rule. We are allowing people to keep more of what they've earned; we are extending the ODSP for employment until coverage is available for the employer; we have hired 12 new staff; and we have set up a database to allow the DAU to review applications more quickly. So we're well on our way. I'm working with the Minister of Finance. The Ombudsman is saying that we owe—

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Thank you. New question.

## NATIVE LAND DISPUTE

**Mr. Toby Barrett (Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant):** To the Acting Premier: Ontario Superior Court Justice David Marshall has ordered Attorney General Michael Bryant to appear in court tomorrow with respect to the ongoing dispute in Caledonia. Will Attorney General Michael Bryant personally appear before Justice Marshall in Cayuga court tomorrow?

**Hon. Leona Dombrowsky (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs):** To the minister responsible for aboriginal affairs.

**Hon. David Ramsay (Minister of Natural Resources, minister responsible for aboriginal affairs):** Of course, the member knows that when a judge asks all parties, he refers to the government of Ontario through the Attorney General. There will be representatives from the Ontario government appearing before the judge tomorrow, as has been ordered, as we contemplate all the other parties that have been asked to attend.

**Mr. Barrett:** I didn't hear a clear answer. I'm assuming that that representative will not be the Attorney General—an Attorney General who has been requested, at the express request of Justice Marshall, to ensure that peace in that community is maintained under the rule of law. I'm assuming from that answer that Mr. Bryant's name can be added to the list of no-shows, including you, Minister Ramsay, and including the Premier of Ontario, Minister Kwinter and Minister Takhar—Caledonia no-shows.

I represent the riding of Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant, which includes Six Nations and New Credit. I predict that someone, somewhere, in my riding tomorrow is going to say, "Where the heck is Michael Bryant?" If it's not important enough to show up, then what is? I do point out that the commissioner of the OPP will be present before Justice David Marshall—

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** The question apparently has been asked. Minister.

**Hon. Mr. Ramsay:** Of course, what the government intends to do is send representatives who are knowledgeable about the situation in Caledonia and who will be able to inform the judge, as he wants to hear the efforts of the provincial government. That's going to be an opportunity for the provincial government to put for-



ward its actions over the last 60 days, as other parties are going to do. That's what we're going to do; the judge has asked that. All parties will attend, and all the information will be given.

#### EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

**Mr. Peter Tabuns (Toronto—Danforth):** A question for the Acting Premier: Deadbeat bosses in Ontario are getting away with cheating workers out of their full wages because you are not enforcing your own employment standards. A case in point: workers from Amato Pizza, who came to this House in February because they had not received their full wages, even after the ministry investigated their situation. To this day, they're still waiting to get paid. Today we're joined by other workers who have faced similar employment violations. Why is your government not enforcing its own Employment Standards Act to protect the lowest-paid workers in Ontario? Why?

**Hon. Leona Dombrowsky (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs):** I thank the honourable member for his question. This government certainly has been very proactive in terms of advocating and introducing legislation and regulations to protect workers in the province of Ontario. We have increased the number of inspectors in the province so that workplaces are safer for the people who work there.

With respect to the particular circumstance that he has brought to attention, I'm sure the minister would have more detail on that, but I thank him for the question. I can commit that I will bring this personally to the attention of the minister for him to respond to.

**Mr. Tabuns:** An extraordinary response. I've heard "proactive" redefined today in the House.

These are not isolated examples. They're just a few of the thousands of workers who are still waiting for this government to act so that those workers will get the wages that they're entitled to and that they have not been paid—collectively, under your watch, over \$40 million of unpaid wages, according to your own ministry's numbers. You are not taking this issue seriously; you're not acting on this issue.

Many of these workers—newcomers and women working for temp agencies, for subcontractors—have tried to meet with the Minister of Labour. Are you going to take action? Are you going to adopt the reforms that we've put forward in this House today to deal with the question of unpaid workers?

1520

**Hon. Mrs. Dombrowsky:** I would like to remind the honourable member that our government has initiated an employment standards crackdown. We have increased the number of inspections and we have increased the number of prosecutions. That is good news for members of the labour force in the province of Ontario.

We have prosecuted—and the information that I have here today is exponentially higher than what was prosecuted by previous governments. So our commitment

to providing sufficient supports to people in our workforce is absolutely there and can be demonstrated by the number of inspections that are carried out, the number of charges that are laid and the number of prosecutions that are successfully completed.

I have received information with respect to the issue that he identified in his original question. I have information that the ministry is investigating. The minister will get to you directly on that.

#### SMOKE-FREE ONTARIO

**Mr. David Zimmer (Willowdale):** My question is to the Minister of Health Promotion. Minister, today Ontario entered a new era, one where all Ontarians will be able to breathe easier. The laws prohibiting smoking in enclosed public places are now equal and strengthened throughout the province. All communities, from Willowdale here in Toronto, my riding, to the far north, are now protected from exposure to second-hand smoke by the same piece of legislation.

Today, the Toronto Star editorial praised the initiative, noting that in the last election, "Premier Dalton McGuinty pledged to ban workplace smoking within three years of taking office. Today he has delivered on that promise—in full and ahead of his deadline."

Indeed, few government actions since the launch of medicare in the 1960s will do more to save lives and protect Ontarians than this province-wide measure. Now that the Smoke-Free Ontario Act is enforced, is the job done, Minister? What are the goals and the next steps—

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** The Minister of Health Promotion.

**Hon. Jim Watson (Minister of Health Promotion):** I want to thank the member for Willowdale. This is a very proud moment for me and for our government as we celebrate the launch of the Smoke-Free Ontario Act. Above and beyond the rules and regulations with respect to enclosed public workplaces, we also have a prevention program and a cessation program.

Some 80% of Ontarians do not smoke, and this particular law will help protect 100% of the population, in particular hospitality workers like 24-year-old bartender Brad Robinson of Windsor, who said yesterday that his "shift will be much more comfortable."

Our critics, those supported and funded by the tobacco companies, ask why we're infringing on smokers' rights. I say that no one has the right to harm or endanger another fellow human being. This is not about smokers' rights; it's about the rights of all of our citizens to go freely into public, enclosed spaces and breathe the air freely.

**Mr. Zimmer:** Minister, there have been various comments from opponents of this legislation that indicate they have a lack of understanding regarding the new rules in place today. How do you respond to these complaints and concerns? Also, Minister, the economic effects of various jurisdictions going smoke-free still seem to be a point of contention with opponents of the legislation.



Minister, can you provide this House with concrete examples of how this type of legislation will affect local communities?

**Hon. Mr. Watson:** In my own hometown of Ottawa, since the passage of the 100% smoke-free bylaw by city council, 181 new eateries have opened up. New York City saw an 8.7% increase in bar receipts. This legislation levels the playing field across the province.

What's most disappointing is the weak-kneed response from the Conservative Party on this particular piece of legislation. Exactly one half of the Tory caucus either didn't show up to vote for the legislation or, in fact, voted against it. One day John Tory supports the bill; another day he's attacking it. Today, we see the spectacle of my official opposition critic wanting us to water down the bill the very day it takes effect. The Leader of the Opposition also allows his caucus members to run all over the province, supporting big tobacco and anti-smoke-free Ontario rallies. I say to the Leader of the Opposition: Stop being a weeping willow on this issue; stop swaying back and forth; support the right of individuals to enjoy a smoke-free environment.

#### NATIVE LAND DISPUTE

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh (Halton):** My question is to the newly appointed Minister for Small Business and Entrepreneurship in Ontario, the only minister who in the history of Ontario has remained in cabinet after being found in breach of the Members' Integrity Act.

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Chudleigh:** Sorry, it's a fact.

Minister, under your watch, small businesses in Caledonia are dying a slow death. Some have already been forced to close their doors forever, and many others are struggling just to stay afloat. It has been three months, it's been 93 days, and small businesses have lost faith because of your government's delay in coming to terms with the economic reality on Main Street in Caledonia.

Your compensation announcement of earlier this week will not even pay the rent, and it certainly won't reopen those businesses that have been forced to close. Given the poor showing of leadership in Caledonia, I have to wonder then, Minister: Do small businesses mean anything to your government?

**Hon. Harinder S. Takhar (Minister of Small Business and Entrepreneurship):** Let me say that small businesses do mean a great deal to our government. That's why we created this new ministry to support them.

Our government is working very closely with local municipal officials, and we have already provided them with a \$500,000 grant to invest in emergency issues. My colleague the Minister of Economic Development and Trade was there and actually has assured them that we will work very closely with them. Whatever assistance they need, we will provide it. This money is actually intended to provide very basic necessities to businesses that are currently suffering because of these issues that have happened in Caledonia.

**Mr. Chudleigh:** I point out that the Minister of Economic Development and Trade was not in Caledonia. He might have been in Brantford, but he certainly wasn't in Caledonia.

Your package is too little, too late, Minister. Some businesses have already had to close their doors for good. I wonder if the minister can answer me this: Why did it take three whole months—93 days—of watching Caledonia's small businesses struggle before your government acknowledged the need for compensation? Why is that?

**Hon. Mr. Takhar:** Let me tell you this. First of all, we provided \$100,000 to the municipality: \$50,000 for communications, \$50,000 to develop the economic recovery plan. We will continue to work closely with them to address the issue of small and medium-sized business or any business that suffers in that community. The Minister of Economic Development and Trade and the minister responsible for aboriginal affairs have shown quite the leadership, and I'm very proud of what our government has done, on this file.

#### EDUCATION FUNDING

**Mr. Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina):** I have a question to the Minister of Education. The McGuinty government loves to brag about fixing our schools—in fact, Dalton McGuinty even christened himself the education Premier—but for thousands of students in Toronto schools, just being in class puts their health at risk. Take one high school, Parkdale Collegiate. Students there face exposed asbestos, loose ceiling tiles and vermin in the hallways and classrooms. Minister, do you think it's acceptable that our schools pose health risks to our students?

**Hon. Sandra Pupatello (Minister of Education, minister responsible for women's issues):** I appreciate this question. I am very interested to see this report, as I'm sure my education critic is as well. I too would have questions about what the priority projects are for all school boards, not just the Toronto school board but all of them. I don't think that this member opposite is suggesting that we would reach in and direct boards as to which projects are their priorities.

We have asked boards in particular—the Toronto school board as well, which has received more than \$300 million since we became the government; they certainly have had ample funding—to look at their priority projects. We have many, many years to make up for neglect in the education sector. I will be the first to acknowledge that. But I can tell you that in the health and safety reports, on every single point this Toronto school board has improved and reduced the number of schools that are in desperate need of repair. I congratulate—

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Thank you, Minister. Supplementary.

**Mr. Marchese:** You can play "honest Iago" as much as you like, but the evidence from your own ministry, on a list of current capital expenditures on a school-by-



school basis, reveals that you have spent but a pittance of what you had promised.

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Frank Haverkate is an air quality expert. In response to the parent network report, he said, "If these situations are going to be ignored ... there is a real potential that this could be impacting not only the health of the teachers and the staff working in the schools, but also the kids."

Despite your big promises, the problems are getting worse, not better. When will schools like Parkdale and Central Tech get the money they need to deal with asbestos, the mould and the vermin that are putting our kids at risk?

**Hon. Ms. Papatello:** Let me say for starters that the Toronto District School Board has received increases in operating funding to provide more than 200 more caretakers in those schools in Toronto. This is a significant increase—in operating overall, an 11% increase for the Toronto school board—and this at a time, since 2003, that they have 10,000 fewer students. Clearly the funding is not the issue in this case.

I will tell you that on repairs, in our Good Places to Learn initiative, it is this government that is funding \$124 million worth of repairs. Again, this is not a funding issue for the Toronto school board. Yes, the Toronto board has significant issues; yes, we are paying special attention to the operating processes at the Toronto board; but I will tell you that in almost every case we are working with every board—

**The Speaker:** Thank you, Minister.

## EMPLOYMENT SUPPORTS

**Mr. Jeff Leal (Peterborough):** I'm not asking about pharmacists today. Today my question is to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. During my time as MPP for Peterborough, I've met with many employers from my riding who are concerned with the lack of skilled tradesmen in the province. The issue described to me is twofold: First, it's a challenge for an employer to locate skilled tradesmen, and second, there's a need for young people or those in career transition to be counselled in market-driven apprenticeship opportunities.

Minister, can you explain to me how the \$1.8-million announcement you made in Peterborough last Thursday will deal with these two very important issues?

**Hon. Christopher Bentley (Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities):** I was pleased to be with my colleague from Peterborough in his community last week. We made the \$1.8-million announcement to two good organizations that deliver the Job Connect program in his jurisdiction: the employment planning and counselling agency where we actually made the announcement, and also Fleming college.

To give you an example of what the money is used for: We saw an example of how one of the 1,500 people this year will be helped by this program. We met a young man who's now an apprentice with a horticultural employer. He'd received academic upgrading counselling, and now he's working in apprenticeship with an

employer who needed a horticultural apprentice. This is a good example of how a young person gets a good skilled trade and an employer, such as this one in my colleague's fine community, finds the worker he needs to increase his business.

It's great news for Peterborough. It's great news for the 1,500 people who will benefit from this service.

**Mr. Leal:** Job Connect is an innovative and proactive grassroots program that will assist many individuals seeking job opportunities in Peterborough and the surrounding area. Finding that first job in their field of training is a daunting task for many graduates. How will this funding be used in schools and youth employment training centres to assist these young people to achieve their goals?

**Hon. Mr. Bentley:** The announcement we made was part of a \$127-million, province-wide announcement. The Job Connect program is delivered at 129 sites, in more than 80 communities. Most importantly, 190,000 workers and thousands of employers will benefit.

We had two specific targets this year: first of all, how to make sure that new Canadians benefit from the type of bridge programming my colleague has introduced so that they get into the workforce faster; secondly, in the skilled trades, how we can improve and increase the number of apprenticeships and expand the number of opportunities for workers, such as the one we met in my colleague's riding, a benefit from apprenticeships. The types of services include job counselling, academic upgrading, work placements and help for employers in finding the skilled workers they need.

This is good news for Peterborough and good news for all communities in Ontario.

## PHARMACISTS

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer (Kitchener-Waterloo):** My question is for the Minister of Health. On the date of the introduction of Bill 102, in an attempt to demonize those who provide and those who receive professional allowances—in fact you referred to them as "rebates"—we now know there is a double standard because, as you and I know, Minister, the government itself collects rebates. So my question to you is, why is the government trying to eliminate allowances, or rebates, from local pharmacies while you collect rebates yourself? And you know what I'm talking about.

**Hon. George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** With all due respect to the honourable member, first, they're widely known as rebates. There is an attempt, of course, to rename them, but this is what they've been referred to as for a long period of time. The honourable member says I know what she's referring to about collecting them ourselves, but I don't.

But I do think that what we seek to do in the province of Ontario is create a system where our pharmacists are being acknowledged—

*Interjection.*

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** You're not even in your seat.

*Interjection.*



**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** You're not in your seat either—for the work they do in supporting patients. That's why we've introduced a cognitive fee. That's why we've increased, by 7%, the dispensing fee. That's why we're going to create capacity in the markup so that they actually get a benefit from it. That's why we are going to work to develop a code of conduct that will allow some educational allowances to support important work that goes on.

There are elements of the rebates that continue to be murky. Even if you look at all the independent pharmacists who have presented—some say that the figure is 40%, some say larger, and some say that rebates don't exist at all. This is why it continues to be important that we get to the heart—

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Supplementary?

**Mrs. Witmer:** Minister, let's call them rebates, because when you introduced your bill, in an attempt I think, as I said before, to demonize those who provide and those who collect them, you referred to them as rebates. Let's take a look at what the government does itself. They receive rebates. You prefer to call them supplier value-added programs. There are other individuals and groups, hospitals etc., who also receive rebates, or whatever you prefer to call them.

I guess my question to you is, are all of these rebates transparent, and are you going to ensure that they are transparent regardless of who receives them?

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** Now the honourable member has tried to introduce into the discussion some tricky language, but I don't get where she's coming from; I really don't. Where are you at on the issue of these rebates, I ask the honourable member? What I know for sure is that her record and her party's record with respect to pharmacy was that they increased by about 1%, seven cents, the amount of the dispensing fee increase they paid to pharmacists. That's the record of their government.

We want to increase that by 7%; that's worth \$52 million. We want to introduce a cognitive fee—that's worth \$50 million—to acknowledge the work that pharmacists do on the front line. We've proposed to re-create the capacity in the markup, \$60 million worth of additional value for those independent pharmacies and others, and to develop with pharmacy, in partnership through the Ontario Pharmacists' Association and the pharmacy council, the capacity to move forward with a code of conduct that really does guide what is appropriate payment from generic companies. Right now it's very, very murky.

**Mr. Robert W. Runciman (Leeds–Grenville):** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: When the member replied to his initial question, the Minister of Finance made a sexist comment and I ask you to ask him to withdraw and apologize.

**The Speaker:** I heard no such comment, but if it was made I'll give the opportunity to the minister to withdraw.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker:** New question?

**Ms. Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt):** I have a question to the Minister of Health. I attended a rally today at Convocation Hall, where hundreds of community pharmacists came to express their serious concerns regarding Bill 102. They know, because they know their work better than anybody else, that the bill is not revenue-neutral and that many independent community pharmacists would close as a result. Pharmacists want to play a bigger role in the health care system. They want to provide increased important health care services, but they can't do that if they're forced out of work by Bill 102.

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When will you finally recognize that your bill has serious negative financial implications for community pharmacists, and when will you make the changes necessary to ensure that pharmacists and pharmacies will be able to offer high-quality services to the patients who depend on them?

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** I appreciate the question from the honourable member, because today she put her loving arms in wide embrace around the concept of rebates, but these remain to be very murky. There's nothing guiding them. There are no rules guiding them. We don't know what's involved in terms of trips, in terms of tickets to special events and the like. So I ask the honourable member, who's now cozied up with that group, to help to get to the bottom of the issue with respect to these rebates.

On point, to the question that the honourable member raises about alterations to our package: Like all of the bills that I've had the privilege of bringing forward and taking to committee, we do look for the opportunity, including supporting NDP amendments very often at committee, and we'll do that again. So next week, the committee will have the opportunity to consider some amendments, and I'm very open. My staff is meeting with the coalition. We've had 30 meetings with the Ontario Pharmacists' Association. This is very apt evidence that we're working closely, listening carefully and very willing to consider amendments that continue to advance good-quality care for patients, and if it can be of benefit to those parties, then we're—

**The Speaker:** Supplementary.

**Ms. Martel:** Isn't it strange that if the government gets a rebate for its purchase of flu vaccines, that's okay, but when generic producers give promotional allowances to pharmacists, somehow there's something hidden and wrong about that? Maybe the government needs to explain that contradiction to pharmacists in Ontario.

Here's the story of Rosanne Currie, who's a pharmacist and an owner of two rural pharmacies in Walkerton and Lucknow. Her pharmacy offers clinics to patients on diabetes, arthritis, heart health and osteoporosis. The pharmacy provided 400 flu shots last fall, even though she lost money because it cost her more to do than she got compensated from your government. She provides services to the nursing homes and residential lodges in the area, including being an active member in the



infection control team, performing quality assurance audits for those same homes. She provides home visits to seniors, does pill splitting for the elderly, community seminars, and the list goes on and on. She made it clear yesterday that if this bill passes, the community pharmacy services will change drastically. The pharmacy retail business, especially in rural Ontario, will be—

**The Speaker:** Thank you. The question has been asked.

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** I have no doubt that the pharmacist spoken of is providing a fantastic service, but it really doesn't help to get at the heart of the matter if the honourable member is condoning all rebates and pretending that all of them are delivering direct patient services. We can't be certain of that. That's why we ask the honourable member, and other members of the committee, to work with us to get to the bottom of the matter, because we also know that our generic costs in the province are subsidizing a variety of these promotional allowances, which are not supporting the things we all agree are important for patients.

Of course, as we work towards bringing this bill back to the House, we're going to continue to work with people, to meet with them, to seek to address their concerns. I just think that there is an inconsistency there amongst the range of these rebates, promotional allowances, that are being paid. We think that it's murky and that it should be transparent. Accordingly, that's why it's so important that people continue to work to ask the hard and very direct question: "What is the nature of the rebates that you're receiving?" Because there is an inconsistent pattern across the province of Ontario.

#### ARTS AND CULTURAL FUNDING

**Mr. Tony Ruprecht (Davenport):** I have a question to the Minister of Culture. Toronto's cultural renaissance is creating a lot of excitement in Toronto, in our city and, in fact, beyond Toronto, in Ontario and beyond our borders. Great cities like Toronto need great cultural landmarks like the Art Gallery of Ontario, the National Ballet School, the Canadian Opera Company, the Gardiner Museum, the Ontario Science Centre, the Royal Conservatory of Music and the Royal Ontario Museum.

These institutions represent a major engine for Ontario's cultural vitality, with important social and economic functions. They attract millions of people every year, making Toronto a preferred cultural tourism destination. Research indicates that many American tourists believe that because they've been in Toronto once, they've seen it all. But we know better. I believe that these cultural organizations are seven more reasons to visit Toronto and discover enlightening programs year after year.

What the people of Ontario want to know, and what we want to know, Madam Minister, is this: What is this government doing to help these seven institutions?

**Hon. Caroline Di Cocco (Minister of Culture):** This government, under the leadership of Dalton McGuinty,

believes that it is important to invest in our cultural sector. I'm proud to say that our additional investment of \$50.5 million, announced last March, will help the fundraising campaigns and help these hubs of excellence realize their visions of growth.

The province of Ontario's total investment for these seven projects is \$152 million, plus land at \$31 million. Our government has also recognized entertainment and creative clusters as one of the three Ontario economic sectors expected to experience the most rapid growth in the next 20 years.

We're on the side of the people of Ontario, because they understand the value of a vibrant and flourishing arts and cultural community. We support these projects because they enrich our quality of life and contribute to the economic prosperity of our province.

**Mr. Ruprecht:** I'm glad to see that the McGuinty government is doing something very substantive. One hundred and fifty-two million dollars and land valued at \$31 million for these seven cultural projects is remarkable and a very good start, but these cultural institutions need support from the federal government as well. They are waiting and waiting for the federal government and their response, but that has not been forthcoming.

I'm concerned about this lack of response, since it places greater pressure on you to do even more. Are you able to find other innovative ways, or even other partners, to strengthen and support these seven projects and seven cultural institutions that we need here in Toronto and indeed in Ontario?

**Hon. Ms. Di Cocco:** I'm pleased to say that I've certainly contacted my federal counterpart and encouraged that they support these projects as well. Also, to capitalize on our assets and opportunities, our government is developing plans to foster an environment that is going to support even more growth and nurture our hubs of excellence.

Each year, millions of people across Ontario have the opportunity to experience these exhibits, performances and events in their own communities. These cultural renaissance projects are changing our province's cultural landscape and have generated an incredible amount of private sector support; it's estimated at more than \$500 million. The collaboration among governments and the private sector, as well as individual and corporate donors, benefits our cultural institutions and helps shape who we are as a society.

#### SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

**Mr. Norman W. Sterling (Lanark-Carleton):** My question is to the Minister of Community and Social Services. You have said that the residents of Rideau Regional Centre and its sister facilities will not be moved without the consent of their families. I have heard recently from the father of one resident, who is trying to work with your ministry to find an appropriate place for their 42-year-old son. He's six feet tall and very strong,



but has the mental age of less than a three-year-old. He can't talk, doesn't understand directions and sometimes has to be restrained in order to prevent him from hurting himself and others. Staff at Rideau Regional Centre have been warned that no one person should try to restrain him on their own, for their own safety.

The father is worried his son won't have the services he requires if he moves out of the centre. At Rideau Regional Centre, he has a doctor, a dentist, psychologists, dietitians, nurses and physiotherapists, among others. He can move around the grounds with some degree of freedom. He has a swimming pool and a gym, and he has programs.

Madam Minister, how can you replicate this level of service at a group-home level?

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur (Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for francophone affairs):** I want to thank the member of the opposition party for his question. I want to reassure him that no resident will be moved without the approval and co-operation of the family. I also want to reassure him—I cannot speak to the case he is talking to me about, but I can say something. I have been visiting the Rideau Regional Centre and I have also visited the community where they receive these individuals. I can tell him that before they leave the institution, there is a program that is developed for them. They are connected with professionals in the community before they leave the institution.

I want to reassure you that the service he has been receiving will be available in the community where the person will be moved.

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## PETITIONS

### FREDERICK BANTING HOMESTEAD

**Mr. Jim Wilson (Simcoe–Grey):** “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Sir Frederick Banting was the man who discovered insulin and was Canada's first Nobel Prize recipient; and

“Whereas this great Canadian's original homestead, located in the town of New Tecumseth, is deteriorating and in danger of destruction because of the inaction of the Ontario Historical Society; and

“Whereas the town of New Tecumseth, under the leadership of Mayor Mike MacEachern and former Mayor Larry Keogh, has been unsuccessful in reaching an agreement with the Ontario Historical Society to use part of the land to educate the public about the historical significance of the work of Sir Frederick Banting;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“That the Minister of Culture and the Liberal government step in to ensure that the Banting homestead is kept in good repair and preserved for generations to come.”

I've signed that petition, and I want to thank Dr. R.W. Banting for sending it to me.

## TRADE DEVELOPMENT

**Mr. John Wilkinson (Perth–Middlesex):** “Petition to the Ontario Legislative Assembly:

“Fair Auto Trade with South Korea

“Whereas more than 260,000 Ontarians make their living and support their families through their careers in the auto industry in Ontario, which has become the pre-eminent manufacturer of motor vehicles in North America; and

“Whereas Canada imports more than 130,000 vehicles annually from the Republic of Korea, which imports virtually no vehicles ... from Canada and does none of its manufacturing or assembly in Ontario or in any other Canadian jurisdiction, even though Canadian auto workers make the best-quality, most cost-effective vehicles in the world; and

“Whereas the government of Canada aims for a free trade agreement that would include the Republic of Korea in 2006, does not address the structural trade imbalance in the auto sector, and includes no measures to require Korea to reduce tariff and non-tariff barriers to Canadian-made vehicles, auto parts and other value-added services or components;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“That the government of Ontario insist that the government of Canada either cease free trade discussions with the Republic of Korea or make any proposed agreement contingent on fair and equal access by each country to the other's domestic markets in manufactured products such as motor vehicles and in value-added services, and ensure that Korea commits to manufacturing vehicles in Canada if Korea proposes to continue to sell vehicles in Canada.”

I look forward to giving this to our new page Tyler.

## HIGHWAY 35

**Ms. Laurie Scott (Haliburton–Victoria–Brock):** “Highway 35 Four-Laning

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas modern highways are economic lifelines to communities across Ontario and crucial to the growth of Ontario's economy; and

“Whereas the Ministry of Transportation has been planning the expansion of Highway 35, and that expansion has been put on hold by the McGuinty government; and

“Whereas Highway 35 provides an important economic link in the overall transportation system—carrying commuter, commercial and high tourist volumes to and from the Kawartha Lakes area and Haliburton; and

“Whereas the final round of public consultation has just been rescheduled;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Liberal government move swiftly to complete the four-laning of Highway 35 after the completion of the final public consultation."

This was brought to me by many members from my riding of Haliburton–Victoria–Brock.

### TRADE DEVELOPMENT

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn (Oakville):** "Whereas more than 260,000 Ontarians make their living and support their families through their careers in the auto industry in Ontario, which has become the pre-eminent manufacturer of motor vehicles in North America; and

"Whereas Canada imports more than 130,000 vehicles annually from the Republic of Korea, which imports virtually no vehicles or parts from Canada and does none of its manufacturing or assembly in Ontario or in any other Canadian jurisdiction, even though Canadian auto workers make the best-quality, most cost-effective vehicles in the world; and

"Whereas the government of Canada aims for a free trade agreement that would include the Republic of Korea in 2006, does not address the structural trade imbalance in the auto sector, and includes no measures to require Korea to reduce tariff and non-tariff barriers to Canadian-made vehicles, auto parts and other value-added services or components;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the government of Ontario insist that the government of Canada either cease free trade discussions with the Republic of Korea or make any proposed agreement contingent on fair and equal access by each country to the other's domestic markets in manufactured products such as motor vehicles and in value-added services, and ensure that Korea commits to manufacturing vehicles in Canada if Korea proposes to continue to sell vehicles in Canada."

### LONG-TERM CARE

**Mr. Ted Arnott (Waterloo–Wellington):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, and it reads as follows:

"Whereas long-term-care funding levels are too low to enable homes to provide the care and services our aging seniors and parents who are residents of long-term-care homes need, with the respect and dignity that they deserve; and

"Whereas, even with recent funding increases and a dedicated staff who do more than their best, there is still not enough time available to provide the care residents need. For example, 10 minutes, and sometimes less, is simply not enough time to assist a resident to get up, dressed, to the bathroom and then to the dining room for breakfast; and

"Whereas those unacceptable care and service levels are now at risk of declining;

"We, the undersigned, who are members of family councils, residents' councils and/or supporters of long-term care in Ontario, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to increase operating funding to long-term-care homes by \$306.6 million, which will allow the hiring of more staff to provide an additional 20 minutes of care per resident per day over the next two years (2006 and 2007)."

Of course, this petition enjoys my support, and it comes to me from families who support residents at the WestMount long-term-care residence in Kitchener.

**Mrs. Carol Mitchell (Huron–Bruce):** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas long-term-care funding levels are too low to enable homes to provide the care and services our aging seniors and parents who are residents of long-term-care homes need, with the respect and dignity that they deserve; and

"Whereas, even with recent funding increases and a dedicated staff who do more than their best, there is still not enough time available to provide the care residents need. For example, 10 minutes, and sometimes less, is simply not enough time to assist a resident to get up, dressed, to the bathroom and then to the dining room for breakfast; and

"Whereas those unacceptable care and service levels are now at risk of declining;

"We, the undersigned, who are members of family councils, residents' councils and/or supporters of long-term care in Ontario, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to increase operating funding to long-term-care homes by \$306.6 million, which will allow the hiring of more staff to provide an additional 20 minutes of care per resident per day over the next two years...."

### CONVENIENCE STORES

**Mr. John O'Toole (Durham):** It's a pleasure to present this petition on behalf of small business in Ontario. Because of CFIB, we're here today. It reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Ontario Korean Businessmen's Association (OKBA) represents 3,000 family-owned and -operated small convenience store businesses across Ontario who are being driven out of business by the McGuinty government; and

"Whereas the McGuinty government has hurt OKBA members by hiking WSIB rates, hiking commercial hydro rates, and dumping the high costs of implementing Bill 164 on these small family-run businesses;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Convenience stores are the last family-run businesses in every neighbourhood throughout Ontario and are in urgent need of both compensation and help from the government to allow replacement categories" for



products that have been banned, such as tobacco. The prohibitive practices of the McGuinty government are hurting small business.

I'm pleased to sign this in support of small businesses in Ontario.

#### TRADE DEVELOPMENT

**Mr. Bob Delaney (Mississauga West):** I'm pleased to join with my legislative colleagues this afternoon, and certainly with the management and labour force at DaimlerChrysler in Brampton, in this petition to the Ontario Legislative Assembly. It reads as follows:

"Whereas more than 260,000 Ontarians make their living and support their families through their careers in the auto industry in Ontario, which has become the pre-eminent manufacturer of motor vehicles in North America; and

"Whereas Canada imports more than 130,000 vehicles annually from the Republic of Korea, which imports virtually no vehicles or parts from Canada and does none of its manufacturing or assembly in Ontario or in any other Canadian jurisdiction, even though Canadian auto workers make the best-quality, most cost-effective vehicles in the world; and

"Whereas the government of Canada aims for a free trade agreement that would include the Republic of Korea in 2006, does not address the structural trade imbalance in the auto sector, and includes no measures to require Korea to reduce tariff and non-tariff barriers to Canadian-made vehicles, auto parts and other value-added services or components;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the government of Ontario insist that the government of Canada either cease free trade discussions with the Republic of Korea or make any proposed agreement contingent on fair and equal access by each country to the other's domestic markets in manufactured products such as motor vehicles and in value-added services, and ensure that Korea commits to manufacturing vehicles in Canada if Korea proposes to continue to sell vehicles in Canada."

This is an excellent petition. I'm pleased to sign it, to support it and to ask page Gregory to carry it for me.

#### HIGHWAY 26

**Mr. Jim Wilson (Simcoe-Grey):** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the redevelopment of Highway 26 was approved by MPP Jim Wilson and the previous PC government in 1999; and

"Whereas a number of horrific fatalities and accidents have occurred on the old stretch of Highway 26; and

"Whereas the redevelopment of Highway 26 is critical to economic development and job creation in Simcoe-Grey;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Liberal government stop the delay of the Highway 26 redevelopment and act immediately to ensure that the project is finished on schedule, to improve safety for area residents and provide economic development opportunities and job creation in Simcoe-Grey."

Of course, I agree and have signed that petition.

1600

#### OPPOSITION DAY

##### PROVINCIAL PURCHASING POLICY POLITIQUE D'ACHAT PROVINCIALE

**Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** This is the NDP opposition day motion:

That the Legislative Assembly calls on the government to sustain and encourage good-paying manufacturing jobs in Ontario, and in particular, to implement a "made in Ontario" policy that ensures that streetcars, subway cars, and rail transport cars for Ontario municipalities that are purchased with funds in whole or in part from the government of Ontario are manufactured in Ontario.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** I think I heard Mr. Hampton move opposition motion 3. Mr. Hampton.

**Mr. Hampton:** This is an important issue, for a number of reasons. I think all of us would acknowledge that the price of gasoline is sky-high and that, given the unwillingness of either the federal government or the provincial government to intervene to ensure more rational gasoline prices, the price of gasoline is probably going to continue to increase. So we're going to see more and more people in cities and even in towns across Ontario turning to urban transit as an affordable and reliable way to travel back and forth to work and to everything else that they must do. I think it's a fair assumption that urban transit is going to become more and more important, not just in Ontario but elsewhere in other provinces, in North America and indeed around the world.

This is a real opportunity for Ontario, at this time, to stake out a large and significant part in manufacturing urban transit equipment, whether it be subway cars, streetcars, light rail cars or other forms of urban transit cars. This is obviously going to be a growth industry. Not only is it a growth industry, but I think anyone who's familiar with the industry knows that there are a lot of spin-offs from this industry. It's not just a single, solitary, narrow manufacturing sector; there are all kinds of parts spin-offs, technology spin-offs, process spin-offs. I would think that Ontario, given the fact that we're a very urban province, and urban centres are growing all the time, would very much want to be part of, and in fact take a majority interest or a big interest in, the manu-



facture of urban transit equipment: subway cars, streetcars, light rail cars or, as I say, other forms of transit equipment.

In fact, if you look back over the last 20 years, it has been the policy of successive governments not only to make sure that we invest in this sector, but to make sure that where urban transit equipment—urban transit rail cars, streetcars and so on—is needed for Ontario cities, it is manufactured in Ontario, and to make sure that, as much as possible, we grow this sector of our manufacturing base. That has been the policy of successive governments. The government that I was part of, the NDP government, worked very hard, for example, to establish the Bombardier plant in Thunder Bay as a major manufacturer of urban rail transportation equipment. The Conservative government following made every effort to ensure that the Bombardier plant in Thunder Bay grew and continued to benefit from the growth and the development of urban transit systems in Ontario.

But what we're seeing now under the McGuinty government is almost a complete reversal of that policy, and it stands out in complete contrast to what's happening in other provinces and indeed what's happening even in the United States.

We saw just a few weeks ago the province of Quebec announce their financing of an over \$1-billion contract for the building of new subway cars for the Montreal subway system, the Montreal metro: \$1 billion. But part of that financing agreement by the government of Quebec was a requirement that the manufacture of those rail transit vehicles be done in Quebec to create and sustain this industry in Quebec, to create and sustain good-paying manufacturing jobs in Quebec.

In the United States, if an urban transit system, whether it be, for example, the Los Angeles transit or New York transit or Boston transit system, or any other transit system in the United States, receives any amount of American federal government funding for the manufacture of transit vehicles, half of the manufacturing work must be done within the United States. So obviously the United States has an urban rail transit/urban transit policy to ensure that that industry continues to have a base in the United States, that American suppliers, American manufacturers and American workers continue to play an important role in what is, by all accounts, a growth industry.

So that's what is happening in the province of Quebec, right next door to us; that's what is happening right next door to us across the United States. But what do we see here in Ontario? What we see here in Ontario under the McGuinty government is a policy that is headed in the opposite direction. The McGuinty government is going to put up \$200 million of financing for the city of Ottawa to purchase rail transit equipment that will be manufactured in California while workers who have the experience, who have the knowledge, who have the ability to manufacture this rail transit equipment at the Bombardier plant in Thunder Bay are laid off. It has become very clear that that is the McGuinty government's policy.

Now, there is an opportunity here. There's an opportunity here to not only sustain employment at that excellent manufacturing facility in Thunder Bay; there is actually an opportunity to position that manufacturing facility in Thunder Bay to be a leader not just in Ontario, not just in Canada, not just in North America, but a world leader in terms of the manufacture of urban transportation equipment: subway cars, streetcars, light rail cars, and other forms of urban transportation equipment. There's a real opportunity here to position that plant, to make Thunder Bay a world leader in terms of this kind of manufacture.

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I think we all know that the government of Ontario is going to have to make very big contributions to urban transit systems in this province over the years to come. So when opportunity is being lost here, it's not just those workers who are on layoff—and many of them have been on layoff now for an extended period of time—but an opportunity is being lost, an opportunity, to ensure that Ontario gets a major portion and an important portion of the manufacture of urban rail transit equipment now and going into the future. A positioning opportunity is being lost.

If this were just happening in isolation, that would be bad enough, but in fact within the city of Thunder Bay, the McGuinty government's policy of driving hydro-electricity rates through the roof has already eliminated over 1,000 good-paying manufacturing jobs in the pulp sector, the paper sector and in the manufacture of industrial chemicals.

This issue of positioning this manufacturing facility in Thunder Bay to be a world leader is, by itself, an important issue; ensuring that skilled, capable, knowledgeable workers don't continue on layoff and that more skilled, capable and competent workers at this manufacturing facility aren't laid off in the future. In addition to doing that, there's also the issue of the loss, as I say, already under the McGuinty government of 1,000 good-paying manufacturing jobs in the pulp sector, the paper sector and industrial chemical sector as a result of this government's policy of driving electricity rates through the roof.

We've seen over the last few months the McGuinty government's willingness to put hundreds of millions of dollars into the auto parts sector and into the auto assembly sector. We've seen this government boast about how much money it's willing to put into some areas of innovation and research. But here's a situation where the government is going to spend this \$200 million and get no benefit, or virtually no benefit for it, in terms of a manufacturing sector that can grow, can develop and can be an important source of economic activity, not just for Thunder Bay but for all of Ontario, and an important source of good-paying, sustainable manufacturing jobs.

I call on the members of the McGuinty government to recognize how wrong-headed their policy is. The McGuinty government, if they're going to finance \$200 million for the purchase of rail transit cars by the city of



Ottawa for city of Ottawa transit, should step in and simply say: "Look, we're implementing a made-in-Ontario policy. We want to see the manufacturing plant in Thunder Bay continue to grow, continue to develop expertise and continue to be at the cutting edge of this kind of work."

If the McGuinty government can do it for the auto sector, if they can do it in terms of money for research and development in other sectors of the economy, why wouldn't they also do it in terms of the manufacture of urban rail transit equipment, especially in the context of the city of Thunder Bay?

McGuinty government members will always show up for photo ops and will always show up for this announcement or that announcement, so I'm going to be very interested today to see how they vote, because this does come down to an issue of positioning Ontario, particularly positioning Thunder Bay to be a market leader in terms of the manufacture of urban rail transportation equipment. It's got an especially important impact on an economy that has been hurt by the policies of the McGuinty government, an economy in the Thunder Bay region where thousands of hard-working people have been laid off. There's a real economic impact here, and a real jobs impact.

I just want to conclude by pointing out that if this policy is good enough for the United States—and it is, the "Buy America" policy of the United States—if this policy is good enough for the province of Quebec, then where is the McGuinty government? Why have they so seriously lost their way? If the McGuinty government sees this as an acceptable policy for the auto sector—and they do; they attempt to boast about it every day—if they see it as an acceptable policy in terms of some kinds of research and development, if it's an acceptable policy and a good policy in those areas, why have they forgotten Thunder Bay? Why have they forgotten the workers of Thunder Bay, the economy of Thunder Bay and the important manufacturing base of Thunder Bay?

I'm going to be very interested to see how the Liberal members of the government vote and if they're prepared to recognize that what's good for the auto sector is also good for the manufacturer of urban transit equipment. What is good in terms of creating jobs in southern Ontario ought to be good as well in terms of creating jobs in a northern Ontario city like Thunder Bay. When the McGuinty government has destroyed over 1,000 good-paying manufacturing jobs in the city of Thunder Bay through its policy of driving electricity rates through the roof, are they prepared now to take a positive step in terms of the economy and the workers of Thunder Bay and ensure that some benefits are put in place—long-term, sustainable benefits—in a manufacturing area that's going to grow?

That's the gist of the argument. That's the gist of this issue. The McGuinty government has let the workers of Thunder Bay down. They've let the economy of Thunder Bay down. The McGuinty government is headed in totally the wrong direction, especially when you compare

the McGuinty government's lack of policy in this area with what is happening very positively in Quebec and what has been the long-term policy objective of the "Buy America" strategy in the United States.

I'll be sharing my time with the member for Timmins—James Bay. Thank you, Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Further debate?

**Hon. Donna H. Cansfield (Minister of Transportation):** I'm pleased to rise to speak to the motion before the House today. It is essential to keep our people and goods moving through Ontario. Our quality of life and our economy depend upon it. That is why our government is making record investments in our transportation infrastructure, both on our highways and in our public transit systems.

Congestion on our highways not only costs the economy but also means less time with our families and with our friends. That is why we are taking a balanced approach towards a better use of our existing infrastructure and plan and prioritize future expansion of our highway and transit network.

The McGuinty government is on the side of commuters. Our goal is to ensure that public transit is a viable alternative to people using their car. We need to ensure it's efficient so that we can get more people onto the buses, streetcars, trains and subways that will ease congestion on our roads, improve the air we breathe and, ultimately, our quality of life. That is why we are making a \$1.2-billion investment in transit this year. That's the largest investment in over a decade.

The McGuinty government is showing our commitment to public transit by being the first government in Ontario to offer municipalities a reliable and stable source of transit funding through the hugely successful provincial gas tax program. Over the first five years of the program, we are investing \$1 billion in transit across Ontario, providing municipalities with funding to purchase new buses and other transit equipment and to expand transit services. In this, the second year of the program, 110 municipalities will be receiving \$232 million in gas tax funding, up from \$156 million in the first year. These results are a clear success. Ridership is up 3.4% across the province. To put it in perspective, that is the equivalent of taking 18 million cars and trips off the roads every year.

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The McGuinty government is committed to getting public transit back on track after years of neglect from previous governments. In addition to our major investments in municipal transit systems, we are moving forward to take a region-wide approach to creating a seamless and integrated transit system, and prioritizing our transportation planning in the Greater Toronto Area and Hamilton.

That is why I would invite all members of the House to support our proposed legislation to create the Greater Toronto Transportation Authority, the GTTA. If passed, our proposal will meet the growing number and growing needs of commuters in this region and lay the foundation



to bring together the province, municipalities and local transit agencies.

Commuters do not see municipal boundaries. People want to ensure that they can get from Hamilton to Whitby, Richmond Hill to Toronto, quickly and efficiently.

If passed, the GTTA will create an integrated and more convenient transportation network. The GTTA's transportation plan will conform to our growth plan and our greenbelt objectives and municipal official plans. The growth plan for the greater Golden Horseshoe sees transit as the top priority for moving people.

Our government has made the safety and reliability of Ontario's transportation infrastructure, including public transit, a priority. In addition to our provincial investments, we are dedicating \$838 million this year to expand and modernize public transit in the greater Toronto Area alone.

We've created Move Ontario, a new one-time, \$1.2-billion investment in Ontario's public transit systems and municipal roads and bridges. Move Ontario means \$670 million that can be used to extend the TTC subway to York region, \$95 million that can be used for the Brampton AcceleRide program, and \$65 million that can be used for the Mississauga Transitway.

We are proud of the investments we have made in public transit. When making transit investment, this government believes that people should get the best value for their money. That is why we believe that purchases of transit vehicles should be done in an open, fair and competitive bidding process. This will ensure the best outcome for transit riders and the best value for taxpayer dollars.

We continue to work with municipalities, our transit partners and industry to ensure that we are making the right investment in transit systems across this province. Our goal is to ensure that public transit is a viable alternative to taking the car. Our quality of life, our environment and our economy depend on it. That is why we're working to ensure that commuters are first and that we are getting the very best value for taxpayers' dollars.

Since 2003, 30 Bombardier bi-level railcars have been delivered to GO Transit in contracts worth \$90 million. The province and GO Transit recently invested another \$55 million to add 22 new bi-level railcars to the GO Transit fleet. They are currently being manufactured at Bombardier's Thunder Bay plant and delivery will start later this year.

The city of Ottawa has announced Siemens as its preferred partner on the O-Train LRT project.

Municipalities are free to make purchasing decisions that best meet the needs of their communities, and we encourage them to do so. That means better value for transit riders, better value for municipalities and better value for Ontario's economy by encouraging a strong and a competitive industry.

Ontario is part of a global economy, and we, as a government, must strive to balance between the technologies we have at our disposal here in Ontario and what is

available throughout the world. Companies like Siemens and Bombardier have the ability to harness the benefits of global technology to provide sustainable transportation solutions while ensuring that they are creating jobs in Ontario. Our obligation is to support technology and employment growth while ensuring that technology adopted for Ontarians is the safest, most advanced and most sustainable for their tax dollars.

We are on the side of Ontario's businesses which help Ontario prosper. That's why we have created the Ministry of Research and Innovation, which invests in projects throughout Ontario, including the new medical and related sciences discovery district, MaRS, in Toronto and the Waterloo Research and Technology Park; and introduced a \$500-million advanced manufacturing investment strategy that provides loans to help industry stay afloat. We've introduced a refundable apprenticeship training tax credit, and we've started to phase out the province's capital tax, which taxes investment instead of profit, by introducing a 5% tax rate cut in January 2007, a full two years earlier than originally planned. We have encouraged strong job creation, with almost 230,000 net new jobs since we were elected.

In conclusion, we believe in Ontario businesses and we believe in public transit. We are making public transit a priority by providing a stable source of funding through the provincial gas tax program, by introducing legislation to create the Greater Toronto Transportation Authority, by opening the HOV lanes to help public transit users save time; by investing \$1.2 billion this year in public transit and municipal roads and bridges through Move Ontario, by making record investments in GO Transit and transit across the province, and by our belief in a fair and open procurement process.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh (Halton):** I suppose it's our turn.

It's an interesting motion: "That the Legislative Assembly calls on the government to sustain and encourage good-paying manufacturing jobs in Ontario, and in particular, to implement a 'made in Ontario' policy that ensures streetcars, subway cars, and rail transport cars for Ontario municipalities that are purchased with funds in whole or in part from the government of Ontario, are manufactured in Ontario."

It's an interesting one because the Ontario government, which has put, I think, \$200 million into the project of a light rail transit system for Ottawa, apparently put that money into that project with no strings attached. It's not surprising, I suppose, that they would do that, that they would put this money into that project with no strings attached, because it's quite obvious that this government does not have a policy regarding private sector investment of this nature.

You know, a policy like this, strictly speaking, may contravene NAFTA, for instance. However, in NAFTA there is a specific exclusion. When a municipality or a level of government wants to make a purchase and put certain strings on it, there is an exclusion. This is allowed under NAFTA when a municipality or a government is making these kinds of purchases.



That exclusion does not occur when you're dealing with the purchase of wines. If the Ontario government's own stores, the LCBO stores, want to make a special project or a special purchase of Ontario wines or promote Ontario wines in some way that isn't equal or fair to California wines or wines from other places in the world, that is not allowed under NAFTA. However, in the case of streetcars or rail cars or buses that are purchased by the municipality, it is allowed.

In the province of Quebec, they have a policy in this regard. That policy would talk to having, for instance, 70% Quebec content in the products. This is something that isn't unusual with provinces. It tends to develop or assist in industries being able to create or maintain industries within their jurisdictions. That's probably a good thing, providing the purchase price is still getting good value for taxpayers' money. I think that's one of the criteria.

Quebec has a policy that has three elements. First of all, there's price. Getting fair value or good value for taxpayers' money is always an important part of any policy. Secondly, the policy indicates that you have to honour trade agreements, and in the purchase of railcars or streetcars or buses for municipalities, that would honour either the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade or the World Trade Organization or NAFTA agreement. Thirdly, there has to be an economic benefit to Quebec. That's their policy: an economic benefit to Quebec.

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I think those are good criteria to put in place when you are bringing in a program that is going to spend \$200 million—not an inconsiderable sum—of Ontario taxpayers' money. It would be prudent for the government of Ontario to put some kind of criteria around that \$200 million that would bring some benefit to the province of Ontario while protecting taxpayers' dollars and making sure that good value for the money was in fact received.

It is a clear and yet flexible policy that the province of Quebec has, which this government of Ontario, the McGuinty government, doesn't appear to have. They always start out their talks by saying, "We have a plan. We have a plan for prosperity in Ontario." But when you see things like this happening, that plan seems to be more vapour. It seems to be out there in cyberspace someplace. It's out there in somebody's imagination, perhaps. We don't see it in hard copy, on paper. We don't see it in this House.

Over the last year to year and a half, there have been over 80,000 manufacturing jobs lost. I could run down that list of manufacturing jobs that have been lost in Ontario: companies like the pottery manufacturers and Nacan Starch in Collingwood; companies in Milton; companies in Burlington; companies in southwestern Ontario; the Nestlé plant in Chesterville, Ontario, which used to be the largest instant coffee manufacturing plant in North America, is shut down now. Just last week the government made an announcement that it is putting a team in place to help with the transition of that plant. The

announcement was made over a year ago, and they're just getting around now to putting a plan in place to help some of those people who are out of work.

It's interesting: The unemployment rate in this province is something like 6.2%, 6.1%; Perhaps it is 6.3%. But when you're unemployed, the unemployment rate is 100%. So for the unemployed people, the people who don't have gainful employment in this province, 6.2% or 6.1% doesn't mean anything to them. When they lose their job, that unemployment rate is at 100%. That's something that I don't think is clearly recognized by this government.

Some of the policies of this government really make me wonder whether or not it is not bent—they seem to be working towards making Ontario into an economic wasteland. The economic engine of this great country, which has always been Ontario, seems to be deteriorating and not going forward with concrete policies that are building on the strength of this province; for instance, our energy costs. One of the criteria for any company operating or thinking of operating in Ontario or moving to Ontario or continuing to operate in Ontario has to be the cost of energy that they are going to use in their manufacturing or business pursuits. The cost of energy rates very high when finding a location where you are going to operate as a business.

Of course, when this government was getting elected, it promised to maintain the cap on electricity prices at 4.3 cents per kilowatt hour. It wasn't very long, I think two or three months after they got elected, that they decided the 4.3 wasn't feasible, and it went to 4.7. Then it went to 5.5, and it has gone up again May 1. Overall, there has been a 55% increase in the cost of energy. Well, if an industry looks at Ontario and says, "They said three years ago that they were going to maintain a cap, and now we're looking here at 55%, over half as much again in the cost of electricity." I mean, what's it going to be in the future?

This government doesn't seem to have a plan on how to hold down energy prices or at least move them up in concert with other jurisdictions with which we're competitive. But they've gone holus-bolus: a 55% increase. It has affected household bills. It has also very drastically affected the list of companies that have gone out of business in this province. In fact, every company in Ontario has been affected by this in a negative way.

They talked about closing the coal plants. It was talked about again in the House today, and we asked for a date and whether or not they're going to stand up and meet that date. I think everybody understands that you can't take 25% of the capacity of this province to produce electricity out of the system without replacing it. I think everybody outside of this House understands, anyway, and we understand over on this side of the House that there's no way you can replace 25% of the power of this province in the next year and a half.

The government's promise was to remove all coal generation capacity by 2007, and we cannot physically replace the energy that that would remove from Ontario



in that period of time. If that can't be done, then obviously the coal plants aren't going to close; hopefully they're not going to close. Although we all want cleaner air, we all want the lights on as well. If those energy plants close, we're going to have brownouts and blackouts across this province, and companies are going to have to shut down because they don't have electricity to turn the wheels. It just doesn't make any sense at all.

So when a business looks at Ontario from the perspective of energy costs, and they look at the cost and the supply of energy, they say, "What is this province doing? What is this government doing? Why are they talking about these coal plants that they're going to take off-line?" Maybe, just maybe, this government is so nuts that they'll actually do it, and if they actually do it, that industry that is going to try to operate here would perhaps be operating two or three days a week, depending on the supply of power. Of course, you can't operate that way, not in today's environment. The company would be out of business. So why would they operate in Ontario, and if they were thinking of moving, why wouldn't they ramp that up and get out of the province in a planned and orderly way before that disaster hits Ontario?

In essence, this government is destroying the confidence of business, and destroying the confidence of business is something that is very expensive and very difficult to turn around. It's going to take many years to build that confidence up again.

You know, there are other promises this government made: promises about taxes. The Premier, then the Leader of the Opposition, stood in front of the television cameras during the last election and promised that there would be no tax increases: "We won't increase your taxes. We won't lower them either." That was the promise. Well, what did he do? In his first budget after being elected, he raised taxes in Ontario: the largest single tax increase in Ontario's history. He didn't just break it a little tiny bit; he broke it as much as he could possibly break it.

#### *Interjection.*

**Mr. Chudleigh:** The member from Stoney Creek is defending the promise-breaker, but that's all right. It's interesting that they are so enhanced in the rightness of breaking promises in order to sit on that side of the House. I think there's a moral compass that is missing when that kind of philosophy comes through.

You know, the health tax was brought in. The small business tax was headed for 4%; it was at 6%. It now sits at 8%. So the small business tax is basically twice what it should be. It's 100% more than it was when we left office. These are companies that hire almost 80% of the people in Ontario. They create a tremendous amount of prosperity in this province, and yet they have doubled the income tax rate on these small companies.

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Ontario also has the second-highest tax on the manufacturing industry in all of Canada. We've got the most manufacturing; it would stand to reason that we would be the most competitive in our taxes on this sector. But no,

that's not the case; we are the second-highest in the manufacturing sector.

**The capital equipment tax:** We had a plan that it was to be eliminated, I believe in 2007 or 2006, this year. It was gradually being cut back. This is a tax where if a company wants to buy a new piece of equipment—that's a good thing; that probably involves more jobs or making jobs more secure or making their production more secure—if they purchase it, they then have to pay the government an additional tax on it. It's a non-productive tax. It is one of the worst taxes that a manufacturing or business-oriented province or jurisdiction could possibly have. So getting rid of that tax was a very good thing, and yet since this government has been elected, that capital tax has stayed exactly where it was.

**The health care system:** This government promised to provide more and better health care, when you need it, where you need it. What did they do? In the first part of their mandate, they delisted eye exams from OHIP; they delisted chiropractors and physiotherapists. All of those costs have come off the government and gone on to individuals within Ontario.

It's a sad day that this government doesn't seem to have the policies in place that allow industry to have confidence in where this province is headed.

The tax system that the Liberals seem to be in love with is more and more taxes. This goes back for many years. If you look back at the Peterson years—1984 was the last year that the Conservatives brought in a budget. Larry Grossman was the Treasurer then, and the budget that he brought in was for \$24 billion. Well, in 1990, Bob Nixon brought in the last budget of the Peterson years, and that budget was for \$48.8 billion—more than double what Larry Grossman's last budget was. The Liberals were in power for about six and a half years, and they actually doubled the amount of taxes that they took from Ontarians. In this case, when Mr. McGuinty was elected Premier, the province of Ontario was collecting about \$65 billion in taxes; this year we brought in a budget, I believe, for \$82 billion. That's a 26% increase in just three years. This government is in love with taxes; it is in love with spending your taxes and your dollars.

In the procurement business, when we're procuring rail cars or procuring something that municipalities or provincial governments have a hand in, I would look back on the water bombers that the Ministry of Natural Resources purchased from Bombardier back in 1995, 1996, 1997. We made arrangements with Bombardier for those purchases that those water bombers would be assembled in Ontario. It was a large contract—I think it was a little more than \$200 million—but Ontario got the assembly of those water bombers. That was a good thing for Ontario. There was a plant that was found in the near north, and those water bombers were assembled in that hanger. The result of that is that there's an industry still there today, with huge employment. They assemble water bombers, and they're being shipped all over the world. We have water bombers in Greece; we've sold water bombers to Turkey; we've sold water bombers in South



America and Europe—in Finland, I believe. It's a great business. That's the kind of policy that can drive an industry and create jobs in Ontario, and that kind of policy is absolutely absent from this government. It's absent from this \$200-million project that's going into Ottawa. It is absent, which is the reason this motion came into being.

They always start by saying they have a plan, but their plan, such as it is, doesn't appear to be very comprehensive. That economic plan is not doing the pharmacists any good in this province. There are perhaps 3,500 pharmacists in this province, and 300 to 500 of them are going to go out of business with the policies that the Minister of Health is bringing in in Bill 102. He is going to eliminate \$500 million of private money from the pharmacists' income, and he's going to replace it with \$50 million from the public sector. How that makes sense, I can't figure out, and how the pharmacists are going to make up that drop from \$500 million to \$50 million in their incomes—they're not all going to be able to do it. If they are small pharmacists or if they are in remote communities, they're going to be out of business. They're not going to be able to survive.

The CGAs: That's another thing, the certified general accountants in Ontario. There is a piece of paper coming through the Attorney General's office that, if he decides to put it into effect—I think he has to make a decision by June 22, but if he decides to put that into effect, the certified general accountants in this province are going to have a very difficult time surviving, because they are going to take somewhere between 40% and 60% of their business and move it out of the certified general accountants' offices into the chartered accountants' offices. That's not fair, and that was never the intent of the legislation either. But this government seems to be sitting on its hands while these kinds of things take place in the province, and they are not working to the benefit of Ontario.

I see that my time is up, so I'm going to end there.

**Hon. David Caplan (Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal, Deputy Government House Leader):** Oh, take more time.

**Mr. Chudleigh:** I'm going to share my time with the member for Durham, and I know that he will do a terrific job. I know the member for Durham is very succinct when he talks about these kinds of things, I say to the minister of infrastructure, and perhaps he's a little more brutal than I am on the government and you would rather have me speaking than him. But be that as it may, I take that as a compliment, and I will now pass the torch to the next speaker.

**Mr. Khalil Ramal (London—Fanshawe):** I am always honoured and privileged to stand up to speak on many different occasions, different issues. Today we are speaking on an opposition day motion brought by the leader of the third party, Mr. Hampton.

We've been listening carefully to what he said. He talked about a lot of things. He talked about our record as a government. Many people across the province of On-

tario will listen to him, but they are not going to agree with him, because our record and our results prove his accusations are wrong. We invest heavily in infrastructure in the province of Ontario, more than any government for the last 20 or 30 years. We have a great minister for infrastructure, and he pays a lot of attention to the infrastructure of this province, because for many different years no one paid attention to the important issue of infrastructure.

I had the privilege today to visit the Brampton DaimlerChrysler factory and listen to them, and they said that infrastructure is the most important element for their business, to keep their business competitive and give them the ability to compete on a national and international level. We have to invest in infrastructure to make Ontario and its cities accessible, whether it's from Canada to the United States or from city to city.

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This is our government listening and responding to the people who decided to invest a lot of money in our province. As a result of this investment, many great companies like Chrysler, Ford, GM, Bombardier, Siemens and many other companies come into Ontario to invest in this great province because they know that if they ask the government to do something for them, they will respond, because the government of Ontario knows how important infrastructure and manufacturing jobs are for the government and for Ontarians. That's why we invest heavily in supporting many different companies in the province to stay and remain open, to hire more Ontarians and make Ontario home for their factories. As a result of that, we have Toyota deciding to open in Woodstock, Hino in Woodstock, expansion in Brampton and Waterloo for Linamar, and many different companies, because they know they have a government that respects their business and honours the job they do.

I want to respond to the leader of the third party when he was talking about the contract between the city of Ottawa and Siemens. As you know, he was talking about a policy. When they were in government, why didn't they enforce this policy? We still found that same strategy and same policy being adopted through the years, from the NDP time to the Liberal time to the Conservative time to the present time. We respect the citizens of the province of Ontario. The municipalities have a right to do whatever they want, and we don't micromanage small governments and small issues in Ontario. We are the funder, the supporter for those municipalities, giving them the ability to strengthen their transit systems and their infrastructure, but we don't tell them what to do. We respect the people who put them in that position to make a decision on behalf of them. That's why Ottawa found the deal with Siemens more valuable; it saved taxpayers some money in order to make that deal with Siemens instead of Bombardier. We respect their decisions.

I also want to tell the member opposite that the Siemens factory has been in Ontario, has been in Canada, for more than 150 years. They employ in Canada alone 7,000 to 8,000 people in high-paying jobs. I think they



deserve the chance to compete like other companies that exist in this province.

I want to tell the member opposite that he's wrong. Hopefully he can join the government and support our infrastructure funding and our strategy and vision for Ontario.

**Mr. John O'Toole (Durham):** It's a pleasure to have the opportunity to get on the record on the opposition day motion from Mr. Hampton and the NDP Party. It makes eminently good sense. When you listen to the motherhood aspect of this, the "made in Ontario," all of us here, I believe, would support the industries in their riding. Indeed, all of us collectively would support the industries in Ontario. I think that's what Howard Hampton is calling on Dalton McGuinty as the leader and the Premier of this great province—I don't like to digress too far off, but I would say that this resolution is to draw attention to a very important issue, whether it's in the city of Ottawa or the city of Oshawa, part of which is in my riding. Transit is a huge issue, and who builds that infrastructure, both the rolling stock as well as the lines and roadways, is really what this is about. What's the government's position on this?

I would just say that there are some other signals in the economy right now that the government lacks a plan. That's where I'm going to broaden this discussion out about Ontario's competitiveness and the lack of leadership and the lack of a plan, whether it's in forestry—we've seen the devastation in the forestry industry. Certainly there are questions in the mining industry, and the resource sector is in some peril as well. They are all talking about the shocking rate increases in energy. The resource sector is struggling, as most of the economists have stated publicly, explaining in a non-political, non-partisan way that the two risks certainly affect the future outlook for Ontario, some of which is not really a direct responsibility of the province. It's the monetary policy issue, the rising Canadian dollar, and having a problem with that. We would recognize that, but the province then has to respond to that, as the head of the Bank of Canada did today in one of his remarks. David Dodge said that Ontario does have tools they can utilize to maintain competitiveness in Ontario, which is about jobs and about "made in Ontario." What he said—I'm just reading an article here from the Toronto Star, which is usually quite friendly to the Liberal Party. In fact, we often refer to the Toronto Star as the briefing notes for the Liberals.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay):** We call it Pravda.

**Mr. O'Toole:** Pravda. I understand that, and that's kind of inside humour. They would say the Sun is our reference point.

The article here is on page F3: "Bank Chief Dodge Urges Ontario to Reform Taxes to Help Business." That's what this article goes on with. In fact, he says, and I'm quoting, "Dodge suggested Ontario could help its troubled manufacturers by reforming its provincial sales tax on business inputs to something closer to the federal goods and services tax.

"The structure of the GST, being a value-added tax, is actually a good structure as far as the manufacturing sector is concerned and it would actually be very helpful if ... the structure of the Ontario sales tax was the same as the structure of the federal (tax)—very helpful for the manufacturing sector because it would relieve the sector of a number of taxes on its inputs'" side of the business.

So what it takes is good stewardship with a plan. It's good that Minister Sorbara is back. I think he's focused on the plan now that he has resolved his legal issues. I'd say it's good he's back. I have a lot of respect for the work he has done and is capable of doing to make sure it's tax-competitive. That's really what this comes down to, whether it's Bombardier or whoever it is that is bidding for business. We need to have a competitive tax structure in the broadest sense to be competitive.

It's not just that sector that troubles me about the "made in Ontario." We had questions here the other day in the House about farm products and rural fairs and rural markets and the government's intrusion there about food inspection. Of course, food safety is very important, but they were going to shut down most of these markets because of a regulation that was too much, too late; an intrusion into the workplace. But now I see the Liberals are at it again. This is in today's paper as well, so I'm not going to some obscure research source to make the argument about supporting Ontario and keeping it competitive.

This article is also from the Toronto Star. This article is today and it's called "Sausage Quandary." Here again we see the government, through regulation, through the long arm of government, through the McGuinty intrusion, if you will, into small business—here it is, here's the story, and I'm going to read it so that I don't misrepresent this intrusion of poor policy of the McGuinty government and its impact on small business, not just large business like the one we're talking about, subway cars, in this opposition day motion.

It says, "For 28 years, Superior Sausage and Meat Products has quietly been going about its business on a residential strip of Dundas Street West near Ossington Avenue.

"It has been smoking bacon and handcrafting kielbasa and other sausages in the back of a house-turned-factory. It has been selling some of its products out of a small storefront shop to locals. But most of its products are sold wholesale, and behind the scenes, to small Toronto delis and street vendors.

"Superior Sausage has been passing its Toronto public health inspections, both as a food store and as a meat processing plant. But since it cuts, cooks, smokes and packages meat—without actually slaughtering animals—it was able to skirt tougher provincial rules."

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Now they've changed the regulations, which are going to force them to be inspected at a different level. This business—that is, Superior Sausage—is being threatened by government red tape and regulations with being put out of business. I think we would all assume and ensure



that food quality and food safety is paramount. There should be measures to make sure that that intrusion doesn't put this company out of business. I'm sure that Superior Sausage, in 28 years, would have heard something in the media if they had not been conforming with that.

There's David Dodge from the Bank of Canada saying they've got to become tax-competitive. There's proof today in the media. Just today, we've all been visited by the Canadian Federation of Independent Business; they had a day here, with all parties invited. All parties attended. I saw Michael Prue of the NDP there, and I saw members of the government as well as members of the opposition—John Tory.

What did they have to say to us? They're concerned about small businesses, not just the difficulty with no smoking and the hospitality industry. It's not just that. Most people agree. What's the transition plan for these businesses to move to other sorts of entertainment and hospitality activities?

What were they bringing to our attention? This is the federation of independent business. These are the small businesses of Ontario. This is what Catherine Swift and others had to say, and it's quite revealing. It's another intrusion. It's the long arm of the McGuinty government into your wallet—actually, into the cash register. They're into the small business cash register, as far as I can see. This is what they said: "The Ontario government is 'consulting' on the WSIB's"—the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board's—"long-standing proposal to extend so-called mandatory coverage" into including owners—

#### *Interjections.*

**Mr. O'Toole:** Are we listening here—directors and executive officers of independent construction agencies.

Here's what we have—I think of Durham, my riding. I can think of a couple of smaller homebuilders; they build mostly custom homes and that kind of thing. They're not large: father, son, a couple of relatives; skilled craftsmen, skilled tradesmen building wonderful homes. In one case—I shouldn't really mention names because there are so many good ones; I'll just leave it at that. Here's what they're going to do: They're going to extend WSIB coverage to these mostly administrative people. Here's what the cost is, and this is a good example:

"The financial impact would devastate small firms (examples based on two additional people in the newly covered categories each earning the maximum insurable of \$69,400 a year)." Here's the impact of two people on electricians: These are the two people who might be required to wire these homes, and they'd be making \$69,000 a year. The employer tax—this is a tax on payroll, 3.2% of gross—comes out to \$4,500 per year. On the other trades—framers and those kinds of people—it's between 9% and 15% tax on the gross payroll. This amounts to two people. It would cost around \$20,000 per job. That's a tax on people who are doing the accounting or the purchasing or the scheduling, where they're not building and not at risk of falling off the house or falling into the basement while framing a

house. This intrusion is another example where the CFIB came today to lobby all parties to stop this constant assault into your pocket to get more money. We're paying more and getting less.

Those are just a couple of examples today. Just recently, I came from the TOGA group—the greenhouse operators of Ontario have a presentation here today. By the way, they were giving out plants and vegetables; samples of their products—very good. I commend them for their lobbying effort; that's what it is. They're educating. But what were they saying to me when I went down? Not just about their operations. Let's think about it. They're greenhouse operators. How do they keep the temperature high in those greenhouses to grow the flowers and the vegetables and the hydroponic stuff? Here's what they said in Greenhouses Grow Ontario: "\$3.9 billion in economic activity," and their concern is the rising cost of energy. Since McGuinty took over—the Premier, right over there—the cost of energy has gone up 55%. It's strangling small business and agriculture.

#### *Interjections.*

**Mr. O'Toole:** Mr. Speaker, they're upset now because I've touched—small businesses are screaming; they're struggling. Agriculture is struggling. It is evident that under this lack of a plan, the stewardship of Dalton McGuinty—it makes me almost have to stop here, I become so engaged and passionate about the lack of a plan and the impact on the economy. I think of the families.

What I think about most are the 75,000 people in the pulp and paper industry, the forestry industry, the agricultural sector and the manufacturing sector who are struggling under the weight of energy, the dollar and, as I said before, taxes—the health tax and now the WSIB tax being increased. When is it going to end? Where is the money going?

Ask yourself—I ask my constituents. I don't mind paying, but ask yourself, "Is it any better?" Are you waiting less time in the emergency room? Are you not paying for your optometry, chiropractic?

You're now going to pay with Bill 102. All the pharmacists of Ontario have appeared. McGuinty and George Smitherman are taking \$500 million out of the pharmacists' pockets. I think of small pharmacists in my riding who have come to me; they have small businesses in Orono and Port Perry. They're saying, "We'll be out of business, John." I said, "Why?" Well, the rebate: They're taking \$500 million out, and they're giving them \$50 million back as a consult fee. I see that members on that committee—the Chair, in fact—are doctors. They know this; they work in partnership with pharmacies. Here they are—another example. Small business: Dalton McGuinty intrudes, a hand in the pocket, and they're out of business. I'm shaken and quite concerned about the future of the economy.

When I get back to the opposition motion here about "made in Ontario," of course we support plans that would encourage and incent, in fact, jobs in Ontario, because these are the very people who will ultimately, through



their payroll, pay the government back and will build great products in Ontario. I'm in support, to that extent, of having a competitive economy, but what's lacking is a government that has a plan and the determination to deliver on it.

**Ms. Judy Marsales (Hamilton West):** I'm pleased to stand to tell the people of Ontario that small business, entrepreneurship and manufacturing are in great shape in Ontario. The McGuinty government strongly supports the manufacturing sector of our economy.

As a member from Hamilton, where the legacy of leadership in manufacturing is continuing through the development of the McMaster Innovation Park—Hamilton, with a long history of manufacturing, for decades. Manufacturing is important to Hamilton and is important to Ontario.

Do you know that in 2005 shipments totalled \$312.6 billion, which is up 55.5% from 1995? According to Export Development Canada, strong global spending is helping Ontario's machinery and equipment sector see an increase of exports by 4% in both 2005 and 2006.

Ontario's productivity for 2005 increased 2.5%, which was led by the manufacturing sector. Ontario's productivity is higher than Canadian productivity, and manufacturing productivity increased by 5.7% in 2005. In April 2005 alone, 10,400 new manufacturing jobs were created, and between January 2005 and January 2006, there was an increase of 178,300 jobs in Ontario, which were being paid an average hourly wage of over \$20.

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The McGuinty government has created two programs in order to improve the manufacturing sector in Ontario: the advanced manufacturing investment strategy and the Ontario auto investment strategy. Ontario's strategic investments have attracted more than \$6 billion in overall announced investments so far.

In response to the member's statement about the O-Train expansion in the city of Ottawa, did you know that the government of Ontario has provided \$200 million to the city of Ottawa for their O-Train expansion? As part of that agreement, procurement was handled by the city of Ottawa. The bidding resulted in the contract going to a consortium consisting of Siemens, PCL and Dufferin Construction. Siemens Canada employs a total of approximately 7,200 employees across Canada. Most are located in Ontario. I repeat: Most are located in Ontario. They produce automotive electric-electronic components at facilities in Tilbury, Chatham and London. Total employment is estimated in these three locations at approximately 1,200 people.

With respect to "made in Ontario," let's bring some facts to disturb the rhetoric. Our government is currently advocating on behalf of the manufacturing community at home and abroad. Did you know that made-in-Ontario government policy would be in violation of the agreement on internal trade? Internal trade rules between provinces prohibit the use of local preferences in procurement. These rules cover government ministries, mu-

nicipalities, universities, colleges, schools and hospitals, and a few crown corporations.

We believe Ontario companies can successfully compete on the world stage. We have ingenuity, competency and capability, combined with a talented pool of skilled labour that does not want to be fenced in by narrow, parochial thinking.

Ontario's citizens appreciate the connections between prosperity in northern Ontario and in manufacturing located in southern Ontario. For example, Ontario's mineral sector is enjoying a boom the likes of which have not been seen since the 1980s. It's a tremendous success story which affects all of Ontario, but especially Hamilton, whose manufacturing and shipping industries rely on a strong commodities market. We're on the verge of witnessing the development of Ontario's first diamond mine on the coast of James Bay. These benefits flow to all communities.

Again, we come full circle. Ontario's strategic investments have attracted close to \$7 billion announced so far, overall.

The McGuinty government has committed \$10 million toward the McMaster Innovation Park project. The Innovation Park is a wonderful example of the evolution of Hamilton's vision for the future. The former site of Westinghouse Canada is now being turned into a vibrant centre for research and opportunities for the commercialization of these wonderful new ideas.

The manufacturing community is definitely strong, and Innovation Park will focus on materials and advanced manufacturing that will connect the communities of science, industry and business. There will be an estimated 1,500 long-term, well-paid, stable jobs, with an annual direct payroll impact of over \$100 million annually. This will be the new home for the GM Centre for Corrosion Engineering Research and CANMET, a federal materials technology laboratory.

McMaster's Innovation Park has other major academic partnerships for global advancements as well, such as MDA—medical robotics; Bell University Laboratories—telemedicine; and GM. Some of the recent job creation announcements in the Hamilton area alone include John C. Munro International Airport—\$1.3 million; National Steel Car, making rail cars for freight transportation—they're hiring 500 new employees in Hamilton; and Stackpole Ltd., which is creating 350 new jobs.

Ontario manufacturing is very important to our government. Ontario manufacturers are world leaders, and we're so proud of the many initiatives to build a strong economy. We look forward to the continued innovation and growth of our manufacturing sector for the jobs they provide and the communities they build. Advancements in science and technology in our manufacturing industry are creating a better Ontario, a better Canada and a better world.

**Mr. Bill Mauro (Thunder Bay—Atikokan):** It is my pleasure to rise and offer a few comments on the opposition day motion today. I'm not sure if it has been read into the record, but I'd like to do that because there



are parts of it I'd like to come back to a little bit later on in my speech: "That the Legislative Assembly calls on the government to sustain and encourage good-paying manufacturing jobs in Ontario, and in particular, to implement a 'made in Ontario' policy that ensures that streetcars, subway cars, and rail transport cars for Ontario municipalities that are purchased with funds in whole or in part from the government of Ontario are manufactured in Ontario." I want to come back to that a little later in my speech.

I don't think anybody—certainly not anybody in Thunder Bay—needs to be told or reminded about the long and distinguished history this plant has in Thunder Bay. It has been around with three or four different names, going back to the Hawker Siddeley days when they were pushing out airplanes in the war effort—the Rosie the Riveters; a long and distinguished history—and has been a major employer in the community of Thunder Bay for a long, long time.

Their professionalism, their ability to produce quality manufactured goods from that plant for in excess of 60 or 80 years, is well known, not only in Thunder Bay and Ontario but worldwide. These people have a terrific record.

Recently, the Thunder Bay Chamber of Commerce, under the direction of the president, Mary Long-Irwin, developed what they thought was a good idea for adoption by the government of Ontario, and that was a made-in-Ontario policy. They have been pursuing and pushing that idea, I would say, for the better part of six or eight months now.

Very recently, the policy they drafted was adopted by the Ontario Chamber of Commerce. I think it's interesting to make the point that the Ontario Chamber of Commerce is endorsing a made-in-Ontario policy, given that these two organizations, which many of us would consider to be the voice of business, might perhaps view a made-in-Ontario policy as being something that's non-competitive. Business is oftentimes interested in a laissez-faire attitude and approach to business, and yet these two organizations, as the voice of business, are very much in support of a made-in-Ontario policy, and I think that's important for us to note. So even the voice of business can find occasions where they think it's important for government to have its hand in and play a role in the use of public funds in this sort of enterprise.

I'm not 100% sure, but I believe the province of Ontario already has a buy-Ontario policy as it applies to highway and bridge construction. I'm not 100% certain; I meant to have an opportunity to check that before today. But I believe there is some sort of buffer or built-in enhancement to try to encourage the success of Ontario companies when it comes to highway and bridge construction. So that is out there as well.

If we go back to the resolution, I want to especially point out the last line, where it says, "are manufactured in Ontario." The motion does not say that we want to develop a policy that will attempt to enhance the ability of Ontario firms to compete. It does not say that we want

to encourage their success. It basically is trying to provide a guarantee that any time this government or any future government in the province of Ontario supplies funds in any proportion or percentage—it doesn't say what—to any municipal enterprise—in this case, I think we're talking about the Ottawa rail contract—that work should automatically be done in the province of Ontario.

The way I read this resolution, it's like giving a blank cheque to whatever company it may be, because that work has to be guaranteed. If we follow this logic to its conclusion, perhaps in Kenora—Rainy River, for example, or in Fort Frances, the area that the member represents, if his municipal council wanted to use municipal tax dollars for a capital purchase and they were going to buy buses for their public transit system, he is saying that their municipal tax dollars would be used to purchase those buses in Ontario no matter what—no matter what the cost would be. I don't think any of us can support that; I don't think any of us would want that to be the intent.

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I think what we all would want to do is support a policy that attempts to encourage the success of Ontario companies, and that's what we've done. We've had some success very recently, and I'm happy to report that the TTC, the Toronto Transit Commission, is undertaking a very significant purchase of about 230 or 250 new subway cars and, through encouragement from myself, through others in Thunder Bay, has entered into a sole-source negotiation process with Bombardier Thunder Bay for the potential purchase of those cars—not a guarantee that those cars are going to end up in Thunder Bay, but certainly the ability for Bombardier Thunder Bay to demonstrate their capability to provide a quality car at a fair, affordable price. I think that's a much smarter way. That's one that I can support. I think that's a way we can all support. But that's not what the resolution says. The resolution says that we should basically guarantee that this work is done in Ontario. I don't think that makes any sense. The previous MOU that existed for this work didn't do that, but the member doesn't mention that in his resolution. It didn't say in that MOU, drafted in 1992, that we guaranteed that the work would go to any particular enterprise. What that MOU said was, "Please go off and sole-source-negotiate," and if they couldn't come to a successful conclusion in that negotiation, then it would be understandable that they would go off and have a public tender process.

The city of Ottawa obviously feels very strong in what it's doing. This is a \$700-million contract. The city of Ottawa is supplying \$300 million of that \$700 million. I've written letters to their mayor, asking him to enter into a sole-source negotiation process with Bombardier in Thunder Bay. They have their own purchasing policies, and they don't want to do that. I wish they would. I don't feel that the goals of the municipal council of Ottawa and my goals are mutually exclusive. I think both are attainable. The city of Ottawa doesn't see it that way.

Speaker, I'm told I have to wrap up. I want to highlight that I certainly agree with the intent of this resolu-



tion and I likely will support it, but it's important to make the distinction that I would never support giving a blank cheque to any enterprise anywhere that they should be able to go out and be guaranteed work. A sole-source negotiated process is the best way to go, and that's one that I can certainly support.

**Mr. Jeff Leal (Peterborough):** It's a pleasure to join the debate on this resolution this afternoon. Just to reiterate, it says: "That the Legislative Assembly calls on the government to sustain and encourage good-paying manufacturing jobs in Ontario, and in particular, to implement a 'made in Ontario' policy that ensures that streetcars, subway cars, and rail transport cars for Ontario municipalities that are purchased with funds in whole or in part from the government of Ontario are manufactured in Ontario," and it is addressed to the Premier of this province.

About seven or eight years ago, municipalities across Ontario looked at the opportunities of what they called preferential procurement policies on a municipal level. It was a topic of great discussion. It involved large municipalities, small municipalities and in-between municipalities. At that particular time, when that discussion took place, some municipalities thought they would adjust their tendering policies and their proposal calls to perhaps give opportunities to local businesses and industries within the boundaries of their respective municipality.

After a lot of discussion and sober second thought, it was thought that such a policy would indeed be detrimental to business development in those respective communities, because what it would do in a place like my hometown of Peterborough is prevent businesses and industries, small manufacturers in Peterborough, from bidding on contracts in Thunder Bay, Cornwall, Cobourg, Hamilton, Chatham or Windsor, effectively putting a barrier around many of these business opportunities and frankly preventing them from getting expertise to bid on these business opportunities throughout Ontario. So municipalities abandoned that approach and thought it was best that indeed municipalities, through their tendering process and proposal calls, get the best value for their taxpaying citizens.

When you also look at that, as I understand internal trade policies within Canada, indeed agreements that have been discussed, debated and put in place by federal governments over a number of years have really worked to break down trade barriers within Canada. If we move forward with this made-in-Ontario policy, Ontario would be erecting barriers that have taken many years to try to break down to facilitate business and trade within Canada. Indeed, it's pretty difficult to talk about free trade with countries beyond our borders if we don't have relative free trade within the boundaries of Canada.

I want to comment: We talk about sustaining and encouraging good-paying manufacturing jobs within Ontario. I've always felt it's a bit of a contradiction, particularly for the NDP, because they're on record as saying that they want to wipe out the nuclear industry in Ontario. The nuclear industry in Ontario employs about

30,000 people. When you look at those industries, it's Canadian technology that has been developed that's sustaining those industries. In fact, it's CAW members—

**Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti (Scarborough Southwest):** Brothers and sisters.

**Mr. Leal:** —our brothers and sisters, who work with our friend Buzz Hargrove, those CAW members at GE in Peterborough, my riding, those CAW members at Babcock and Wilcox in Cambridge, Ontario, those CAW members at Circuit Tech in Port Hope, Ontario. Those are good-paying jobs. The average wage for those individuals is probably between \$25 and \$30 with their benefits included.

Day in and day out, the leader of the third party stands up and says, "What are you doing to sustain good, high-paying manufacturing jobs in the province of Ontario?" If they ever had the opportunity to have the levers of power again in Ontario, with the stroke of a pen they would wipe out that whole industry, which is a Canadian-developed, Ontario-developed tech industry.

I want to talk about Siemens for a moment. They're a very good corporate citizen in Ontario. Siemens has an operation in Peterborough that has grown considerably over the last number of years. In fact, they have set up in the last six months a world-class training centre for technicians for waste and water treatment facilities. Indeed, in their Peterborough operation they actually make all the calibration instruments that would go into municipal waste water and water treatment facilities. Siemens has come to be known, as I said, as a very good corporate citizen, investing back into communities right across Ontario, again developing our manufacturing infrastructure to provide those high-paying jobs that sustain our economy and providing the tax dollars to fund health care, education and the other programs that we're involved in in Ontario.

Bombardier, as I understand it, through their operation in Thunder Bay, is going to get an opportunity to be involved in a fairly large contract that's going to be issued shortly, I believe, by the TTC here in Toronto and hopefully through that sole-sourcing procurement policy will provide sustainability to our friends in Thunder Bay over a long period of time. I think we have to be very cautious, for those who want to support this resolution, that indeed we'll be erecting those trade barriers that we don't want in Ontario today.

The Toronto Transit Commission is looking at opportunities to provide work through their procurement policies to Thunder Bay.

I just want to reiterate that this government has been very successful with the advanced manufacturing strategy here in Ontario. We've heard over the last little while major investments in auto manufacturing. Companies beyond Ontario's borders are making the determination to invest in Ontario, again to create those good-paying jobs: Toyota in Woodstock, Ontario; a major new investment with Honda. Why are they coming to Ontario? They see the advantage of being here with a strong labour force. They see the advantage of a public health



care system that this government has gone to great lengths to sustain, to give Ontario businesses that competitive advantage that's so very important.

I think this resolution today has given an opportunity to highlight many of the positive things this government is doing to sustain manufacturing in Ontario.

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**Mr. Bisson:** I'm very glad to participate in this debate because I really do believe that it comes down to the nub, I would say, of one of the issues we have to deal with here in Ontario: the whole question of what the heck is going on with the economy, especially in places outside of major cities such as Toronto. A big part of the problem that we have is that the government has no policy provincially—and, I would argue, federally—to deal with how you spur economic development outside of the large urban centres. I think Thunder Bay is a good example of that. We have an opportunity in our debate today to deal with that.

First of all, there are a couple of points I would like to basically put on the record and correct right off, because there were some things said in the debate that I think need to be clarified. The member from Peterborough said that New Democrats, if elected, would abolish the entire nuclear industry. What hogwash. There is a nuclear industry there; the plants are running—as if we would shut them off. We're not like Liberals, who would shut off coal plants when you don't have capacity to replace them. What a stupid comment.

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Bisson:** What we are saying is that we believe, quite frankly, that what we need to do in this province—

**The Deputy Speaker:** The member for Timmins—James Bay.

**Mr. Bisson:** “Stupid” is—

**The Deputy Speaker:** It may not be, but if we could temper our language, it would help.

**Mr. Bisson:** Anyway, it's not a very bright comment; let's just put it that way.

I just want to put on the record up front that what we're saying, as New Democrats, is that we think the government's direction, first of all, when it comes to energy, electricity prices and how electricity is organized in this province, is not a very good one. They in fact don't have a plan. We know that, and as a result, hydro prices have been rising and rising and rising, and it's killing thousands of jobs across this province, particularly in those areas where electricity is a big part of the manufacturing processes' cost of doing business. For example, in forestry, electricity is a big part of the cost, which is a huge problem when it comes to paper mills and others. We're saying that the policy the government has is killing jobs.

What we would do, first of all, is invest in conservation to reduce demand overall, and we would take a plan of looking at bringing in mixed generation. But we certainly would not be adding to the nuclear basket. We are dead opposed to doing another Darlington, because we do know how much that cost, what a fiasco that was

and what it ended up doing to hydro bills in this province.

I also want to say a couple of things to the member from Thunder Bay—Atikokan, who raised a number of things here. I thought it was kind of interesting, because he was trying to have it both ways at the same time. He was doing what Liberals are really good at, which is telling people one thing on one side of the room, then going to the other side of the room and doing the opposite. That's basically what he did in this particular debate.

He doesn't agree with us. He was saying that the chamber of commerce in Thunder Bay agrees with the proposal put forward by Howard Hampton, our leader, that if the government of Ontario is going to grant money to a municipality to buy buses, streetcars, subway cars or whatever it might be, it would only make sense that there be a mechanism in place to have manufacturing done in Ontario for those dollars that we spend. That is a policy that we introduced back in 1992 as a government, because we thought it was nuts that you were out there spending literally hundreds of millions of dollars every year to help municipalities buy buses, streetcars in some cases or subways, as in the city of Toronto, and that we were not getting any economic spin from the manufacturing of those particular items being purchased with the taxpayers' dollars spent by the province of Ontario. The chamber of commerce in Thunder Bay understands, as my leader Howard Hampton understands, and the rest of the New Democrat caucus understands, and I would say the people of Thunder Bay understand, that that is a good policy.

For the government to argue, as I've heard unfold here in the afternoon, that somehow or other—I've got to use the quote—we would be giving a “blank cheque” to a manufacturer like Bombardier to gouge the public is beyond the pale. You only have to look at the history of Bombardier in Thunder Bay, as it relates to the goods that they have produced on behalf of their company for their customers who have gotten money from the province of Ontario, cities and towns across this province. That has never been the case. For the member from Thunder Bay to all of a sudden come in here and say, “I'm opposed, because that's like giving a blank cheque”—tell that to the worker who's going to lose his or her job in Thunder Bay. Tell that to the kids who are going to see their father or mother come home because they're not going to have a job as a result of this government's failure to say to the city of Ottawa what should have been said, which is, “You give Bombardier the opportunity to be in the game in order to make those products in Thunder Bay,” those being jobs that would stay here in this province and that we would get the net benefit of. I just say to the government across the way, shame on you for not standing up for the people of Thunder Bay and doing what was right by them.

I'll tell you, overall, people outside the major cities—I would argue even people in the city of Toronto and major cities have problems with the Liberals, but when it comes



to economic development, people who live outside the city of Toronto, people in rural and northern Ontario, are really feeling left out of the game. One only has to take a look at the thousands upon thousands of jobs that have been lost in the forest industry alone across this province. We again had an announcement about three weeks ago that Smooth Rock Falls is going to lose their only employer, the Tembec craft mill, putting all of those workers out of jobs as of July 31, and hoping that maybe Tembec can do something to revive that mill within a 12-month period. So far, the response by this government has been zero—nothing to address the core, fundamental issues that affect the cost of operating a plant in north-eastern or northwestern Ontario—or southern Ontario, as was the case with Cornwall.

Cornwall is losing the major employer in that community.

People in Kenora have lost the major employer in their community. People in Hearst are faced with possible layoffs at the Columbia Forest Products mill, at the melamine and presswood mill. We are working towards a resolution, and I'll say in the House that Mr. Bartolucci has been good on that with us. We went to his office, we asked him to help us in Hearst, and his ministry at least has tried to respond, to give us a chance to put something together that we can propose to the company to keep that particular plant open. But other than that Hearst example, there has been nothing. There has not been a whimper by this government when it comes to assisting the communities of northeastern, northwestern and southern Ontario and the devastation that happened in the forest industry. We have layoff after layoff. Week after week, plants are announcing that they're going to be idle, that people are being laid off, or plants are shutting down entirely, and this government is doing absolutely nothing.

What we're saying by way of this motion in the House today is that at the very least here's an opportunity where we can do something for the people of northwestern Ontario, specifically the people of Thunder Bay, to say if Ottawa is going to get taxpayers' dollars from the province of Ontario to buy streetcars, buses and whatever it might be, surely to God we should give an opportunity to the people of Bombardier in Thunder Bay to produce those goods so that the dollars spent by Ontario—and we're talking in the hundreds of millions of dollars—could be to the benefit of the workers of this province. That is something that needs to be done. In fact, our government in 1992, the NDP, put that particular policy in place. This government is choosing to ignore it.

I also want to comment on a couple of things that were said by the Minister of Transportation, and I thought it was interesting. Personally, I like the person. I think Mrs. Cansfield is a good person. Her heart is in the right place, she tries hard, but I think she misses the point. I was listening to her as she spoke to this issue, and all she could talk about was gridlock and what they're trying to do to reduce gridlock in the city of Toronto. That's the basic problem that we're having outside of Toronto. We're saying, "Yes, fine and dandy; deal with what's

happening in the city of Toronto because they have needs, and we support that as northerners. But why are you forgetting us? Why are you forgetting the people of northern Ontario and other places when it comes to the issue of economic development?"

I give the minister credit. She announced today that there are going to be three connecting-link applications in my riding, and I say thank you for that publicly. But my point is, you spent time talking about what happens in Toronto. This motion is all about what we're not doing and what we need to do for places outside of Toronto. We need to get it in our heads in this Legislature that we need to collectively work together at developing policies that would assist economic development outside of the large urban centres.

It is really a lot easier—and I'll give you a good example. I was talking to someone a couple of years ago who has a major investment here in Toronto. I think he was telling me he spent something like \$15 million to start up a plant that takes waferboard and makes a value-added product with it. When I went to meet with the individual, I asked him, "Why here in Toronto? Why not in Timmins or in other communities where there are waferboard plants?" He said, "Simply put, I can't raise the capital in northern Ontario. When I come to Toronto, there are people within a 10-mile radius who have lots of money in their pockets and it's much easier for me to raise money in Toronto because that's where the money is. And number two, the cost of transporting my finished goods is more expensive than transporting primary goods." It's cheaper for him to take trailer loads of waferboard produced in Timmins, ship it to Toronto, convert it into a finished product and then ship, because he's closer to market. The finished product is much more bulky and would have higher transportation costs associated with it if he were to remain at that plant in Timmins.

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The point I make is this: What have we done to respond to that? It's the same thing as what's going on in Thunder Bay. We have no policy when it comes to how we are going to deal with economic development outside of the major urban centres. I don't care if it's southwestern Ontario, if it's Cornwall, if it's northern Ontario; the issue is the same—not to talk about what's not going on when it comes to economic development north of the 51 in the James Bay communities and in communities in northwestern Ontario and the First Nations communities. There is no economic development going on there. The only economic development that goes on there is, now and then the federal government says, "You can build four houses for the first time in five years," and there's a little bit of construction in the community. That's the only time there's economic development.

I've listened to this government on more than one occasion. I forget who it was; I think it was the member from—I wrote down the riding—Hamilton West, who basically was somehow trying to take some credit for the diamond mine that's opening up in Attawapiskat. Hang



on, whoa. First of all, the diamonds were in the ground way before the Liberals ever came to power. Two, they were discovered way before the Liberals ever came to power. Three, the decision to develop that mine was announced way before the Liberals came to power. Don't come in here and all of a sudden say, "Because we're such wonderful government Liberals we're going to create a diamond mine up in Timmins-James Bay, in Attawapiskat." That decision was made way before you ever got here. Those diamonds are being exploited because there's a dollar to be made by De Beers to exploit them. It's as simple as that. It wasn't this government that did something to trigger De Beers to make this over \$1-billion investment to build a mine and plant just west of Attawapiskat. They made that decision way before you came to office.

Which brings me to my other point when it comes to economic development and, again, to this motion, which is that we have done hardly anything—and I would argue probably nothing, because with "hardly" I was trying to be fair—when it comes to how we deal with economic development for First Nations communities and how we deal with basic issues. I go to communities—and some of you have travelled into my riding. I'm always inviting people to come into the James Bay with me. In fact, I brought a number of members up on committee and other members at different times. Most of our schools are inadequate. There are a few communities in my riding where they have good schools, thank God. It was a lot of work to get those—Peetabeck Academy in Fort Albany is a good example—but they're not the norm.

Most communities north of the 51 have schools that are substandard. You would not send your children to them. My point is, how can you ever develop a local economy in those communities if the kids don't have a chance to get even the most basic education? You cannot operate an economy locally unless you have the capacity in that local economy to have people trained to do the various work that needs to be done. We have not invested a dime in those communities to make sure that those boys and girls who live in First Nations communities are able to stand next to any other boy or girl in this province and be at par when it comes to education. Instead, what do we get? We get kids that don't graduate. Most kids in First Nations communities don't graduate. The percentages are staggering. If you go into a grade 12 class, the number of kids who were in grade 9 who make it to 12 is hardly any. No wonder, having to live in a house with about 15 to 20 other people. How do you study in that environment? Somebody's watching TV, mum's cooking dinner, dad is doing whatever—impossible. You cannot study in an environment like that when you've got 15 or 20 people living in a house.

You have schools that are inadequate. You have a federal government that is missing in action. The federal government should be brought to court and charged with I don't know what. They should be charged with the mishandling of the First Nations issues for this country. I think we as a province have to step in and we have to say

to the feds, "If you can't do it properly, we're prepared as a province to create aboriginal school boards for First Nations across this province and fund them as we do any other child in this province." Why should we all of a sudden say that a child who lives on reserve is not as deserving of education as a child who's not living on reserve? It's ridiculous.

We can sign agreements with the federal government that would transfer the money they now pay over into the province so that it offsets—because they do have a fiduciary responsibility, and First Nations would never allow us to do that transfer unless there was some responsibility by the federal government to live up to their fiduciary responsibilities as signed in treaty. But I remind members of this Legislature, we signed Treaty No. 9, all of the NAN territory. Don't pass it off on the federal government. The province signed that treaty as well. I look at, how are you able to develop an economy, as in the case of Attawapiskat, when you don't have the capacity, people trained to take those jobs?

So here's the example: We're going to be opening a mine in probably about a year and a half to two years. We're going to be hiring about 600 people in that operation after construction. I'm going to predict right now—De Beers's stated goal is that they will hire any First Nation person who is capable of doing the job. Very great, but here's the problem: Who can they hire? How many environmental engineers do we have in Attawapiskat around James Bay; how many qualified electricians, mechanics, millwrights, operators of various types in those mines? We don't have any. De Beers is not in the training business; De Beers is in the mining business.

I argue that the province should say, first, "We are going to be there, fair and square, and we are going to support the training needs of the aboriginal people of James Bay so that two years from now, when that mine opens, they can qualify for those jobs." With that, we would be doing our job and we'd be doing something to create employment and break the cycle of poverty in that community and others. But we're not doing that. We're saying to De Beers, "Basically, you're on your own."

So I say, when it comes to economic development, that this provincial government, this McGuinty government—

**Mr. Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre):** You're not on your own. They get training support for that.

**Mr. Bisson:** You have no idea what you talk of, sir. Go there, please. I invite you all. Come to Attawapiskat, spend a week. Talk to the local citizens. See what's going on. The reality is that it ain't happening. The De Beers operation, to give De Beers some credit, has put some money towards training. The province is playing a very minimal role when it comes to training. We are not doing what has to be done. Why? Because we're throwing the ball back and forth. The province says, "Well, it's a First Nations issue; it's the federal government's responsibility." The federal government stands on the other side and says, "We're not in the business of training; that's the province." So you're stuck in this quandary, and I'm



saying we have to step up to the plate with those communities. If we're going to break the cycle of dependency and we're going to break the cycle of poverty, we have to step forward, we've got to be bold and we have to say, "We are going to invest in education. We are prepared as a province to look at the possibility of taking over education, creating aboriginal school boards, and giving those kids a chance to come out of school so they can compete with other boys and girls across this province."

Back to the motion, and I want to end on this particular point. In the case of the Thunder Bay Bombardier plant, I just have to remind members of a very simple thing. What we ended up with in this particular situation is that Ottawa basically has decided that they're going to go out and source the purchase of the infrastructure they need to buy vehicles for their new transit system, money that is being put forward by the province of Ontario, money that the province is giving to the city of Ottawa to purchase it, and we are doing nothing to make sure that those millions of dollars are spent in manufacturing jobs here in Ontario. I find it very sad and very regrettable that the provincial government does not have the courage to say to Ottawa, as they should, "You are going to step forward and you are going to work with Bombardier toward trying to find, as the city of Toronto did and is doing currently, a manufacturing contract for the goods you're going to need in order to build this particular transit system that you're trying to build in the city of Ottawa."

The motion that Howard Hampton puts forward is a very simple one and it says, "McGuinty, take your responsibility. Do what is right. Stop this in its tracks and basically admit that what we need to have in this province is a policy that says that if the province of Ontario is going to spend dollars to give municipalities or whomever money to buy infrastructure, we should, to the largest degree possible, say that that is going to result in manufacturing jobs here in Ontario." Why would you spend billions of dollars in infrastructure and allow it to be built offshore or allow it to be built out of our jurisdiction?

I stand here on this motion and I will vote for it because I believe that the people of Thunder Bay deserve no less, and what we need to do is to get this government to admit that they've made an error, and to take a step back and redo it so that those workers in Thunder Bay and their families and the local community businesses that rely on the salaries that are made from Bombardier are able to keep on going forward, because Thunder Bay has had it tough. We've had the announcements in regard

to what has happened to those paper mills. I'll tell you, I wouldn't want to be in the shoes of the member for Thunder Bay—Atikokan in the next election. He's going to have a heck of a tough go. It's a difficult thing, because his government has failed miserably the people of Thunder Bay. Now we're asking this government once again to do what is right for the people of Thunder Bay, and we certainly hope that his colleagues on the Liberal government benches are going to support our motion to a larger degree.

J'aimerais finir sur ce dernier point : le manque, et le besoin que le gouvernement mette en place une politique de développement économique qui est vraiment visée pour le reste de la province de l'Ontario et non seulement pour les gros centres tels que la ville de Toronto.

Je veux vous donner un exemple. Il y avait les frères Duval dans les années passées qui ont dépensé au-dessus d'un million de dollars de leur argent pour être capables de bâtir une usine de valeur ajoutée dans la communauté de Mattice. C'était important. Cela a créé une trentaine ou une quarantaine d'emplois dans cette communauté-là. Mais finalement, la compagnie a fallu fermer ses portes et les frères Duval ont perdu beaucoup d'argent, et pour quelle raison? Parce que notre province, ce gouvernement de M. McGuinty, n'a pas en place une politique qui dit, à la fin de la journée, qu'on va faire ce qu'il faut faire pour supporter le développement économique dans les communautés en s'assurant, premièrement, qu'on peut avoir les emprunts nécessaires pour commencer nos entreprises. Il est très difficile d'emprunter de l'argent hors de Toronto. Numéro deux, c'est de mettre en place un programme pour assister les entrepreneurs à développer leurs plans d'affaires, ce qui fait du bon sens. Numéro trois, il faut mettre en place les ressources nécessaires pour supporter les entrepreneurs, une fois que le projet est en place, pour développer les marchés et autres.

Je dis à ce gouvernement que vous avez une chance. Vous avez encore un an. On va voir ce que vous allez faire, mais on vous demande au moins de voter pour cette motion aujourd'hui.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Mr. Hampton has moved opposition day 3. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

The motion is defeated.

This House stands adjourned until 6:45 of the clock.

*The House adjourned at 1751.*

*Evening meeting reported in volume B.*



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO**  
**ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO**

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Deputy Clerk / Sous-greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman

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Ancaster-Dundas- Flamborough-Aldershot	McMeekin, Ted (L)	Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant	Barrett, Toby (PC)
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Beaches-East York / Beaches-York-Est	Prue, Michael (ND)	Halton	Chudleigh, Ted (PC)
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Brampton Centre / Brampton-Centre	Jeffrey, Linda (L)	Hamilton Mountain	<b>Bountrogianni, Hon. / L'hon. Marie (L)</b> Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, minister responsible for democratic renewal / ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales, ministre responsable du Renouveau démocratique
Brampton West-Mississauga / Brampton-Ouest-Mississauga	Dhillon, Vic (L)	Hamilton West / Hamilton-Ouest	Marsales, Judy (L)
Brant	Levac, Dave (L)	Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington	<b>Dombrowsky, Hon. / L'hon. Leona (L)</b> Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound	Murdoch, Bill (PC)	Huron-Bruce	Mitchell, Carol (L)
Burlington	Jackson, Cameron (PC)	Kenora-Rainy River	Hampton, Howard (ND) Leader of the New Democratic Party / chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Cambridge	Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les îles	<b>Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (L)</b> Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
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Davenport	Ruprecht, Tony (L)	Kitchener-Waterloo	Witmer, Elizabeth (PC)
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Elgin-Middlesex-London	<b>Peters, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (L)</b> Minister of Labour / ministre du Travail	London-Fanshawe	Ramal, Khalil (L)
Erie-Lincoln	Hudak, Tim (PC)	Markham	Wong, Tony C. (L)
Essex	<b>Crozier, Bruce (L)</b> Deputy Speaker, Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Vice-Président, Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative	Mississauga Centre / Mississauga-Centre	<b>Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (L)</b> Minister of Small Business and Entrepreneurship / ministre des Petites entreprises et de l'Entrepreneuriat
Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	<b>Cansfield, Hon. / L'hon. Donna H. (L)</b> Minister of Transportation / ministre des Transports	Mississauga East / Mississauga-Est	Fonseca, Peter (L)
Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	Qaadri, Shafiq (L)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Peterson, Tim (L)
Etobicoke-Lakeshore	<b>Broten, Hon. / L'hon. Laurel C. (L)</b> Minister of the Environment / ministre de l'Environnement	Mississauga West / Mississauga-Ouest	Delaney, Bob (L)
Glengarry-Prescott-Russell	Lalonde, Jean-Marc (L)	Nepean-Carleton	MacLeod, Lisa (PC)

Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti	Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti
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Niagara Falls	Craitor, Kim (L)	Stoney Creek	Mossop, Jennifer F. (L)
Nickel Belt	Martel, Shelley (ND)	Stormont–Dundas– Charlottenburgh	Brownell, Jim (L)
Nipissing	Smith, Monique M. (L)	Sudbury	<b>Bartolucci, Hon. / L'hon. Rick (L)</b> Minister of Northern Development and Mines / ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Northumberland	Rinaldi, Lou (L)	Thornhill	Racco, Mario G. (L)
Oak Ridges	Klees, Frank (PC)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	Mauro, Bill (L)
Oakville	Flynn, Kevin Daniel (L)	Thunder Bay–Superior	Gravelle, Michael (L)
Oshawa	Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	North / Thunder Bay–Superior- Nord	
Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	Patten, Richard (L)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	<b>Ramsay, Hon. / L'hon. David (L)</b> Minister of Natural Resources, minister responsible for Aboriginal Affairs / ministre des Richesses naturelles, ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones
Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	<b>McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (L)</b> Premier and President of the Executive Council, Minister of Research and Innovation / premier ministre et président du Conseil exécutif, ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins-Baie James	Bisson, Gilles (ND)
Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	<b>Watson, Hon. / L'hon. Jim (L)</b> Minister of Health Promotion / ministre de la Promotion de la santé	Toronto Centre–Rosedale / Toronto-Centre–Rosedale	<b>Smitherman, Hon. / L'hon. George (L)</b> Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Ottawa–Orléans	McNeely, Phil (L)	Toronto–Danforth	Tabuns, Peter (ND)
Ottawa–Vanier	<b>Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (L)</b> Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for francophone affairs / ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires, ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones	Trinity–Spadina	Marchese, Rosario (ND)
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Parry Sound–Muskoka	Miller, Norm (PC)	Waterloo–Wellington	<b>Arnott, Ted (PC)</b> First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier Vice-Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Perth–Middlesex	Wilkinson, John (L)	Whitby–Ajax	Elliott, Christine (PC)
Peterborough	Leal, Jeff (L)	Willowdale	Zimmer, David (L)
Pickering–Ajax–Uxbridge	Arthurs, Wayne (L)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	<b>Pupatello, Hon. / L'hon. Sandra (L)</b> Minister of Education, minister responsible for women's issues / ministre de l'Éducation, ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Prince Edward–Hastings	Parsons, Ernie (L)	Windsor–St. Clair	<b>Duncan, Hon. / L'hon. Dwight (L)</b> Minister of Energy / ministre de l'Énergie
Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	Yakabuski, John (PC)	York Centre / York-Centre	<b>Kwinter, Hon. / L'hon. Monte (L)</b> Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels
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Sault Ste. Marie	Oraziotti, David (L)	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	<b>Cordiano, Hon. / L'hon. Joseph (L)</b> Minister of Economic Development and Trade / ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce
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Scarborough East / Scarborough-Est	<b>Chambers, Hon. / L'hon. Mary Anne V. (L)</b> Minister of Children and Youth Services / ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse	Parkdale–High Park	Vacant
Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	Berardinetti, Lorenzo (L)		
Scarborough–Agincourt	<b>Phillips, Hon. / L'hon. Gerry (L)</b> Minister of Government Services / ministre des Services gouvernementaux		
Scarborough–Rouge River	Balkissoon, Bas (L)		
Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	Dunlop, Garfield (PC)		
Simcoe–Grey	Wilson, Jim (PC)		
St. Catharines	<b>Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (L)</b> Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, Government House Leader / ministre du Tourisme, ministre délégué aux Affaires des personnes âgées, leader parlementaire du gouvernement		

A list arranged by members' surnames and including all responsibilities of each member appears in the first and last issues of each session and on the first Monday of each month.

Une liste alphabétique des noms des députés, comprenant toutes les responsabilités de chaque député, figure dans les premier et dernier numéros de chaque session et le premier lundi de chaque mois.



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Gilles Bisson, Michael Gravelle, Tim Hudak,  
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Peter Kormos, Ted McMeekin,  
David Oraziotti, Maria Van Bommel  
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Bob Delaney, Ernie Hardeman, Rosario Marchese,  
Ted McMeekin, Norm Miller, Jennifer F. Mossop,  
Tim Peterson, Mario G. Racco, Mario Sergio  
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No. 82B

N° 82B

ISSN 1180-2987

## Legislative Assembly of Ontario

Second Session, 38<sup>th</sup> Parliament

## Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Deuxième session, 38<sup>e</sup> législature

# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

# Journal des débats (Hansard)

Wednesday 31 May 2006

Mercredi 31 mai 2006



Speaker  
Honourable Michael A. Brown

Président  
L'honorable Michael A. Brown

Clerk  
Claude L. DesRosiers

Greffier  
Claude L. DesRosiers



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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 31 May 2006

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 31 mai 2006

*The House met at 1845.*

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### EDUCATION STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT (LEARNING TO AGE 18), 2006

#### LOI DE 2006 MODIFIANT DES LOIS EN CE QUI CONCERNE L'ÉDUCATION (APPRENTISSAGE JUSQU'À L'ÂGE DE 18 ANS)

Ms. Pupatello moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 52, An Act to amend the Education Act respecting pupil learning to the age of 18 and equivalent learning and to make complementary amendments to the Highway Traffic Act / Projet de loi 52, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'éducation concernant l'apprentissage des élèves jusqu'à l'âge de 18 ans et l'apprentissage équivalent et apportant des modifications complémentaires au Code de la route.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Debate? The Minister of Education.

**Hon. Sandra Pupatello (Minister of Education, minister responsible for women's issues):** I would like to indicate to the Speaker that I would like to share this leadoff time with the member for Don Valley West.

It's an honour to rise today in the House to speak about Bill 52, the Education Statute Law Amendment Act (Learning to Age 18), 2006. If passed, this legislation will make sure Ontario's students keep learning to 18 or graduation through creative incentives that realize their individual strengths and potential, and targeted enforcement to prevent them from dropping out.

Soon after our government took office in 2003, we launched a \$1.3-billion, multi-year student success strategy. This strategy will allow students to customize their education with relevant and valuable learning choices based on their individual goals, skills and interests. It is ambitious, effective and essential to Ontario's future prosperity.

The strategy is based on the belief that every student deserves a good outcome from his or her education. The first two phases of our strategy are already under way in our schools. They include a student success leader in every school board and 1,300 new high school teachers, including 800 student success teachers in Ontario's

schools; revisions to the grade 9 and 10 applied math curriculum; and 131 lighthouse projects, which I'll cover in more detail in a few moments.

The government also invested \$45 million in technological education, which helped start more than 200 new courses, including hospitality and health care, and more than 500 upgrades to current programs, including robotics and community technology.

Further, six new locally developed compulsory credit courses were created for English-language schools and seven for French-language schools to provide greater choice for grade 9 and 10 students.

We're already seeing results. In the first year of student success, the graduation rate rose from 68% to 71%. That translates to 6,000 more people finishing high school and improving their future prospects. But just to put that into perspective, many of us would be surprised that when we became the government, the dropout rate for high school graduates was 30%—30% in this day and age.

**Ms. Kathleen O. Wynne (Don Valley West):** Unacceptable.

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** It really is unacceptable. We have to demand a standard that, at a minimum, our students in Ontario must achieve a high school diploma.

Our legislation today reflects the third phase of the strategy. As you've heard, the legislation, if passed in its current form, would keep students learning to age 18 or graduation, and of course many of our students are graduating at age 17. But we're doing more than just changing the number. We're transforming high schools into a 21st-century experience that prepares our children for the future. Imagine, the Education Act, in this regard, hasn't changed in some 40 years, but life in Ontario has certainly changed in those 40 years.

#### 1850

Through student success, we have introduced a menu of programming choices that allows students to customize high school to suit their individual needs and potential. This legislation is a component of the government's comprehensive student success program to be made available by all school boards. High school students would now have greater access to quality, co-operative education, dual credits, apprenticeships and other outside learning opportunities to complete their Ontario secondary school diploma, including the new specialist high skills major.

First I'll review these programs and then share how they fit into the current legislation. We'll start with our new specialist high skills major. This exciting, innovative



program gives students a head start on their careers. Students have the option of bundling six to 12 courses that help them prepare for specific employment sectors such as manufacturing, agriculture and tourism. Students who major in high skills will learn on the job, with employers and skills training centres. They'll also have opportunities to earn valuable industry certifications, including CPR, first aid, construction safety and service excellence.

Moving on, you may be aware that we have expanded co-op learning. Students eager to start working or who want to test drive career options can now apply up to two co-operative education credits and one career education or learning strategies credit towards their compulsory graduation requirement. Starting in 2006, this program will run through the summer as well. We're also urging employers to help students drive their careers in high school, before making the right decision about their post-secondary destination. We're calling on all employers to become partners here in our goal of customizing the high school experience for students to better match their individual goals and aspirations.

With the next program, dual credits, students can earn several credits participating in apprenticeship or post-secondary courses and put them towards their high school diploma and their post-secondary diploma or degree. Currently, more than 300 students are involved in dual credit and dual program pilot projects already under way in 36 boards and 14 colleges through the school-college-work initiative. In 2006-07, the goal is to involve all boards and colleges in the province in providing students with opportunities to earn dual credits. A broad range of students will benefit, including the disengaged and underachieving with the potential to succeed, as well as the high-achieving students.

We'll also be introducing credits for external credentials. This is exciting. Students with specialized interests will also be able to count certification by recognized and approved organizations, such as 4-H Ontario, as high school credits. This new program will make its debut in January 2007.

I recently announced the creation of the Student Success Commission. This is a unique partnership of our teacher federations and school board management. It's the first of its kind right here in Ontario. The Student Success Commission will work with me in my capacity as minister to provide advice and to endorse the implementation of our many student success strategy initiatives. The reality is that we need to be certain that what we may be thinking here at Queen's Park can be implemented on the ground, that it will actually work for students. So this commission is tremendously important. These programs add many exciting options for the students, and in the end it's about the students.

But we know that many students are struggling, and we want to help them too. Starting in grade 8, where today approximately 20,000 students are expected to have difficulty making the transition to grade 9, our student success programs help students who need that

extra boost to keep them engaged in learning and to keep them on track to graduating.

The other day I visited with grade 8 students at Lord Dufferin public school in downtown Toronto. We spoke about the challenges ahead of them in adjusting to high school. Our government's new focus on grade 8-9 transition aims to overcome that by helping them settle in and providing support through such measures as increased individual attention and programming that's tailored to fit their individual needs. I think that broadly speaks about the student success strategy. It really is taking a high school curriculum and tailoring it to what our students need in order to graduate.

We've encouraged credit recovery programs. These additional classes are geared at helping students who were unsuccessful in earning a credit work on the expectations they missed, without having to repeat the entire course, which really never made much sense anyway. So we really think this is a good move.

Our government's innovative lighthouse projects, which I referenced earlier, feature small group sizes and tailored instruction, with a focus on alternative learning experiences to engage our students at risk. This alone is a \$36-million investment.

As an example of a lighthouse program, in the Halton District School Board, there's a board-wide continuous entry co-op program that's about re-engaging students who have left school. With the one-on-one support of an itinerant off-campus, co-operative education teacher and a willing employer, students re-engage in learning, earn the valuable workplace skills and begin to plan the next step in their education and career pathway. Of the 53 students who enrolled in the first semester in 2005-06, 83% stayed in the program. Of all of these students, they've earned credits, some earning more than three in a semester.

These really are wonderful programs. They give the students new and relevant choices. They help students take control of their education and their future. This is what one student had to say:

"In my regular high school classes there were too many students, noise and other distractions for me to focus on my studies so I ended up dropping out several times. My school then offered me a chance to recover and complete my remaining grade 12 credits through some opportunities at my local college. It was self-directed, with more one-on-one help, and now I'm a full-time college student with a high school diploma. We need more programs like these."

That was said by an Ottawa high school graduate who participated in an Ottawa-Carleton Catholic District School Board pilot lighthouse project funded by the government of Ontario.

This really is an exciting time to be in high school. Our bill that we're speaking about tonight is called Learning to Age 18; it's not called "classroom to 18" for a very good reason. That's why we've introduced something called equivalent learning, creating more options for our students. Equivalent learning consists of knowledge and skills gained from qualifying sources outside



of a traditional high school, including colleges, schools of music or the arts, or apprenticeship or employment-with-training activities. If passed, this bill will allow all school boards to make equivalent learning available to students. What better way to engage the 30% that were dropping out?

This proposed bill would give me, in my capacity as Minister of Education, the authority to set policies, procedures, requirements and maintain high standards in all of our programs to meet the needs of secondary school students and our learning expectations. The legislation, if passed, would allow school boards to provide learning opportunities to their students in partnership with community groups, the business community, training centres, colleges, universities and other organizations that provide programming for young people. Both school boards and I, as Minister of Education, would be able to enter into agreements with these groups so students can more easily participate in non-traditional educational experiences. I, as Minister of Education, would set criteria and standards for all non-traditional educational experiences. I really think that speaks to the fact that we have got to come into the modern age here and life just isn't what it was 40 years ago. We need to find ways to engage our young people and move them through to graduation.

At this point, I'd like to add a special note about rural schools. When we talk about goals for student success, we mean every single student. Today, we know there's an unacceptable disparity in dropout rates between rural and urban areas. We're working to change that. Ontario's 75,000 rural high school students deserve the same chance for success as their urban counterparts, and we have to be certain that those opportunities exist for our rural students as well.

#### 1900

Just this March, our government announced that it's providing 70 rural high schools with up to \$200,000 of additional funding each through the lighthouse program. Rural students will now have access to new e-learning, agriculture and horticultural training, advanced technology and expanded co-op programs as part of the McGuinty government's plan to enhance the viability of rural schools and help retain rural students.

In total, \$10 million is being invested in the program, the latest instalment in the McGuinty government's rural funding formula, which includes \$20 million provided earlier this year, and now represents more than \$200 million in targeted rural schools funding since 2002-03. To date, rural students are receiving 50% more funding per pupil than they would have had without this targeted investment.

The lighthouse program is part of the new rural student success program announced in December 2005. The program also includes a new rural experience emphasis in the curriculum and \$3.5 million for new e-learning pilot projects.

I've described all the measures we're putting in place to engage students in learning and motivate them to finish school. I turn now to the topic of enforcement.

While enforcement measures are intended as a back-stop to our student success programs, we consider them to be a vital part of this proposed Learning to 18 bill. We have to send a strong signal that we are taking responsibility for student achievement, and research backs this up. The C.D. Howe report that looked at jurisdictions in North America that raised the compulsory school age found that one of the key factors in improving graduation rates was whether the compulsory school age was enforced, and enforced consistently.

If passed in its current form, the Learning to 18 act would raise the maximum fines for parents and employers to \$1,000. We proposed this change because we believe it's important to recognize the significant role that adults play in supporting young people's continued learning. Which one of us in Ontario would ever say to a young person, "You don't need to graduate from high school"? That is just not on in today's world.

Of course, certain exemptions would apply. For example, employers hiring young people as part of a recognized equivalent learning program would not be subject to the fine. Parents would also be exempt from the fine when the young person is at least 16 years old and has withdrawn from parental control.

As well, we believe we're introducing effective and practical enforcement with measures tied to student drivers' licences. Obtaining a driver's licence in Ontario is a privilege; it's not a right. There are already specific qualifications to obtaining a licence: age, knowledge, visual acuity. Under the proposed legislation, regular attendance at school or in approved equivalent learning would be an added qualification students would need in order to obtain and keep their driving privileges.

If passed in its present form, the legislation would require that 16- and 17-year-olds be in attendance at school or have a valid reason for being excused or exempt in order to apply for a driver's licence or upgrade to the next tier of the licence. In addition, for students found guilty of being habitually absent, through this legislation, the court would have the option of suspending a student's driver's licence.

We recognize that there may be circumstances in which it's necessary for a young person who is not attending school to drive. Fair enough. We have no desire to impose additional hardships on a young person who may already be struggling. We would have exemptions for such students. We will be consulting in the future with our education stakeholders to determine the parameters of what those exemptions should be.

In Canada, Ontario is breaking new ground on this front. While there are no Canadian provinces that tie school attendance to driving privileges, 23 states in the United States have some type of policy connecting student attendance to the privilege of driving.

I would suggest that the real penalty for struggling students isn't a suspended driver's licence; it's a lifetime of struggle and limited choices after dropping out at 16 or 17 years of age.

To underscore the seriousness of our belief in the importance of young people being engaged in meaningful



learning, at least to the age of 18 or high school graduation, which often happens before age 18, there must be a consequence for not doing so. Restricting drivers' licences is an important backstop, but it's not the entire plan.

The possibility of fines to parents, students and employers related to chronic truancy has been in place for the last 50 years. Now we propose to use a creative reinforcement by making learning to 18 an extra obligation on students to earn the privilege to drive, with due allowance for truly extraordinary situations.

Most importantly, the government is committed to having the new learning opportunities in place before licensing restrictions are going to be used. We need to stop presuming that it's okay for our student to drop out of high school and that there's nothing that we can do to motivate them. Instead, we insist our students are well prepared, as well prepared as possible, to meet the 21st century. Our high schools have to provide the kinds of programs and incentives that are relevant to students today.

I believe, with the number of initiatives that I've outlined just now, as well as the exciting changes that are still to come even in this first term of our government, we are truly behind our Premier, the education Premier, but more importantly, we are truly behind student achievement, and we want our high school students to graduate. This is just one of those means.

It will be a privilege to move forward in our future till we have a day when every student in Ontario is graduating from high school.

**Ms. Wynne:** It's a real privilege to speak to this piece of legislation, Bill 52, Learning to Age 18. The minister has talked about a lot of the initiatives that we are putting in place with this legislation, and I'd like to talk a little bit about some of the background and why it's so critical that we do this, as well as some of the specifics that we're moving on.

It's quite clear there's no initiative that's more essential to Ontario's future than our plan to ensure that young people keep learning. This legislation is about keeping students in a learning environment and getting them back into a learning environment because of the changes we've made, whether that's in a classroom or outside a classroom, in an apprenticeship or a workplace training program, keeping them there at least until they're 18 or until they graduate and, as I said before, getting them back in, because the programs that have been put in place are appealing enough for students who have left to come back in.

As the minister has said, our student success strategy is about customizing high schools to give every student in Ontario an education advantage. We understand that for years—and really this isn't something that is brand new to education in the province—there have been students, young people who have become disenchanted with education and have left. The difference is that when I was in school, a young student could leave at 15 or 16 and get a job in a factory and could work for their entire

working life in that factory and have a fairly good standard of living. That's not the case any more. Those jobs aren't there, and the requirements for the jobs that are there are much higher than they were when I was in high school in the 1960s.

One of the abiding themes of my political career has been excellence in public education. Nelson Mandela talks about education being the most powerful weapon you can use to change the world. I believe that the initiatives we're undertaking with our student success exemplify excellence in education, and there are compelling reasons for us to move forward on this agenda.

By modernizing our high schools, we're creating more learning options. The minister talked about some of them. She talked about the high skills major; dual credits; the idea that a student could be attending high school and taking a college credit or part of a university credit at the same time; the expanded co-op opportunities, so that two co-op credits now can be used—already this year—and counted as mandatory credits; the expansion of e-learning, so the opportunities for distance learning especially in our northern and rural communities; the possibility of equivalent learning, so that may not be in a classroom but may be in a workplace training opportunity or may be in a workplace training opportunity or in a 4-H club, or there are other opportunities that are being explored that really aren't in traditional classrooms at all. All of those possibilities have to be worked out on the ground with teachers.

#### 1910

The minister talked about the Student Success Commission. What is innovative about this discussion is that the ministry and the boards and the teachers are talking about how to make all of this work, how to make sure that our equivalent learning and our dual credits—all of this—is going to work on the ground in the high schools, instead of the ministry implementing something and then realizing that it's actually not going to work in the schools. The value of upfront consultation is that it's really a decision-making process about what can work and what can't work. That's what the Student Success Commission is involved in, and that is why this is going to be successful; we will have a lot of the kinks worked out of some of these policies before they're implemented.

There's more at stake than ever before for students to get a high school education. It's high-quality and it's meaningful and it prepares them for a variety of post-secondary opportunities. When I was first elected and was asked to be the parliamentary assistant in the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, I would meet with university students and they would say to me, "Why is the ministry called Training, Colleges and Universities? It should be called Universities, Colleges and Training." And I said back to them, "Do you know what? We've got a culture shift that has to happen in this province. We have to start valuing all paths to the workplace, whether it's through university, through a college or through a training or apprenticeship program."

We need to understand in this province that there are many, many options other than just going to university—



and I'm not trashing university. Obviously it's very important for those who want to and can go to university to do that. But here's a statistic that I think points to an expectation, and possibly a disappointment gap. We do a pretty good job of graduating students and sending them to university. About 33% of graduates in Ontario go that route. But 70% of parents think their children are going to go to university. So in that gap between 33% and 70% is the possibility of disappointment and disenchantment, and what we want is to make sure that the education advantage that can accrue for every student, every child in this province, is understood by parents and is valued. It's not for everyone to go to an apprenticeship program, but it's not for everyone to go to a university program either.

Students who drop out of high school face an average quarter-million dollar pay loss over a lifetime according to one study in 2003 by Bhanpuri and Reynolds. James Veale remarked in 2005 that four out of every five prison inmates never finished high school. According to Statistics Canada, leaving school early doubles your chance of being unemployed and makes you five times more likely to need income assistance. So we all know anecdotally that it's important to graduate from high school, but the statistics are there to demonstrate that. We have to fight for every one of those students who has left school or is contemplating leaving school by customizing their high school experience and getting them on a track where they're going to get some wins inside and outside the classroom.

What is it that makes the need for a differentiated environment so critical to our students? And I would suggest it has been a need for many years. It's for reasons beyond what the dropout rate tells us alone. High school is, after all, a time in a student's life when they're looking to find their way and get a glimpse of some of the paths that may lie ahead.

John Abbott, who is a British academic and president of the 21st Century Learning Initiative, who lectures internationally on cognitive development in learning and has been here in Ontario and talked to us about our strategies and what's happening in education in Ontario, asks whether the learning species, human beings, can fit into schools. He responds that the obvious answer to the question, "Can the learning species fit into schools?" is "...of course, a resounding 'yes.' If we humans are the planet's pre-eminent learning species surely none but the most" resistant "of young people" would reject the idea of the "conditions of the classroom. They should welcome the way in which the curriculum designers have delivered to them ... all they need to get good grades" on a plate.

But he also goes on to say that the most obvious answers are not always the right answers, and I agree with him. He suggests that despite the notion that "Schools can do it all," as evidenced by increased investments—he's talking about England here, but we have been investing heavily as well. He asks, what's the learning experience that we want to offer our students?

What is it that we actually want students to take away from the learning experience, and is that something that can only be delivered in a classroom, can only be delivered in a traditional teacher-student relationship?

Here's where I think the cultural shift needs to take place. As John Abbott counsels, "The learning species will never fit comfortably into schools as we know them, and we should not leave schools to function in their present way any longer." Let's face it: We have had this problem in Ontario, in Canada, in the western world for a very long time, that students have left our schools, and so we have to have a radical rethinking.

Abbott talks about treating young adults like apprentices so that they start to need less support from those they are learning from, so that we start to wean them from the kinds of support that they may have gotten in elementary school and middle school. In high school, we need to find ways to give them real responsibility: real responsibility for outcomes in the world, so creating something, building something, producing something. But we also need to give them real responsibility for their own learning, so we need to set up learning environments where they take responsibility.

A. S. Neill, many years ago in his work at Summerhill, talked about freedom and licence for children and the theory that kids will want to learn; if we set up an environment that is appealing to them, they want to learn. But they don't want to be diminished, and they don't want a lack of respect in their learning environment. We need to bear those things in mind, because often people who leave school have very high spirits, are entrepreneurial, have a lot of energy, are interested in seeing the world, are adventurous. Aren't those the qualities we want in our citizens, and aren't those the qualities that we want to capture and make sure we can channel through our traditional learning institutions?

That's what the new programs are about. That's what the lighthouse projects that the minister was talking about are about. They are innovative, creative projects around the province that teachers are very excited about. Our student success leaders and our student success teachers are very excited about the opportunities that we're affording the system right now. Barry O'Connor, who was the director in the Kawartha Lakes board—or was it Limestone? No, it was Kawartha Lakes. He has been leading this student success initiative with our ministry folks, and he is one of the people who has put in place creative programs in his own board. He had students who over a period of a year would build a house in Kingston. They were students who were engaged in a very real-life project, and that's the kind of thing that we've got to put into our school system if we expect kids to stay in school.

I think I'm going over my time here, but there's a lot to say about this because it is an incredibly important initiative. So we know a lot of good things are happening in our high schools. We want to capitalize on those. We want to make sure those best ideas are spread across the province for all the students.

Last year, 45,000 Ontario students dropped out of high school. That number grew steadily over the last decade,



and it peaked in 2003 with 49,000 students. Mr. Speaker, 45,000 students is about the same size as the entire population of Timmins or Cornwall. We can't write off a whole city of students. We have to keep those kids in school.

The minister talked about our investments, the overall \$1.3-billion investment in our student success strategy, and we know that these programs are working. The dropout rate is falling; the graduation rate is going up. We are committed that by 2010, Ontario will graduate 85% of its students, up from only 68% when we were elected in 2003.

The last time we raised the school-leaving age in Ontario was 1954. I was one year old, and that's a long time ago, I can tell you. In the 1950s, it wasn't considered unreasonable for 14- or 15-year-olds to leave school to work on the farm, to find their way without a high school education. We know that's not good enough now.

Our teachers agree with us. OSSTF—that's the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation—has said, "OSSTF believes students should not be allowed to opt out of education before achieving high school education. In order to accomplish this goal, students who have not obtained a secondary school graduation diploma should be required to remain in school until age 18."

The teachers who are on the front lines working with these students in the schools know that this is the way we have to go.

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I want to make one final comment about a direction we don't want to go in. This is a path we really don't want to follow. There was recently an article in the New York Times, March 26, 2006. This article points out a pattern where schools across the country in the United States are using up to five of six class periods to focus on math and reading. Students who have been identified in this category in these jurisdictions in the States are being allowed to study only math, language and a little bit of phys. ed. for five out of six hours of the day.

What's happening with those kids is their horizons are being narrowed. It's in the name of improving literacy and math skills. I understand that and that's a laudable goal. I believe that what we need do for students who are struggling is, yes, we need to invest in those literacy and numeracy skills and we need to put people in place to work with those students. That's what we're doing with our student success teachers. But beyond that, we have to broaden their horizons. We have to make sure there is a wide range of opportunities for those kids, because they are the students who are looking for different options. Yes, we need to improve their literacy, but boy, do we need to provide options that keep them alive and interested and learning.

That's what this student success initiative is about, making programs relevant to young people who may later on in their lives want to do a purely academic program. They may want to come back after they've been in the work world. They may want to come back

and build on their work experience and do an academic degree, do an MA, a PhD, whatever, but in those early years of their late adolescence/early adulthood, they're not there. They don't want that academic experience, so we need to give them options that allow us to weave the academic learning into another kind of learning.

We need to get more students choosing a successful post-secondary destination, whether that be the workplace, college, university. We need to facilitate colleges, high schools, universities and apprenticeship programs working together, because as in any sector there are always turf issues. If we succumb to the fear, perhaps from colleges, that high schools are going to infringe on their turf, or from high schools that colleges are going to infringe on their turf, we're going to lose opportunities. We know there are already articulation agreements between colleges and high schools that can allow for the development of a dual credit process, and that's what we have to do. We have to put aside those turf concerns and really focus on what's positive and what's possible.

I am very proud of this initiative. I think this is a very important step forward for education in Ontario. It's a profound and important departure from what we've done in the past, where we have said, "Well, we'll just do more of the same and hope we're successful." That's not going to work. We have to do something different. That's what this legislation is about, and I look forward to seeing those successes as we go down the road.

**Mr. Ted Arnott (Waterloo-Wellington):** I enjoyed the presentation this evening brought forward by the Minister of Education and the member for Don Valley West. The member for Don Valley West said that she was almost out of time, and yet there were about 23 minutes on the clock, unfortunately, when she sat down. I gather from that that the government whip and perhaps the government House leader are continuing this strategy of trying to muzzle the government backbenchers so they're not able to participate fully in these debates, and I'm not sure why that is, but I hope they are given the opportunity to speak to these issues as long as they would want when there's time on the clock.

I know the Minister of Education has now had almost two years in her responsibility—or two months, rather.

**Hon. Ms. Papatello:** Six weeks.

**Mr. Arnott:** Well, almost two months, because I understand you were appointed on April 5. I have not yet had the opportunity to congratulate her in this House on her new responsibilities, now that the member for Parkdale-High Park has stepped down and left this House. Of course, this is a bill that was left over from his tenure as Minister of Education. It was introduced by him in this House on December 13.

I'm told that when he introduced this bill he stated the fact that the dropout rate in the province of Ontario was something like 30%, yet I'm also told that on December 16, 2005, Statistics Canada released data showing that Ontario's true dropout rate was less than 10%. I'd like to ask the minister a question as to how she would reconcile those two facts.



Having listened to her speech as well as the speech of the member for Don Valley West, while they talked about the noble goal the government has of reducing the dropout rate, they didn't talk too much about this punitive measure that the government has brought forward in Bill 52, which is actually the principle of the bill, to take away the driver's licence of a student who is unwilling to continue in their education up until 18.

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** Were you not listening to me? Did you come late?

**Mr. Arnott:** No, I listened to it, and there was very little talk about that. I was wondering, perhaps, if the government is considering amending the bill and taking that particular feature out of the bill.

**The Deputy Speaker:** For clarification, I would say that this is questions and comments, not further debate. Thank you. The member for Nickel Belt.

**Ms. Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt):** In response to the comments that were made by the government side, let me say the following, because the minister talked about how 23 states in the US have some type of policy that connects student attendance or achievement to the privilege of driving. What she didn't say, of course, is that any of the research that's been done has not proven that that similar tie-in is what is getting kids back to school.

Let me just read from the Toronto Star article, Sunday, December 18: "Nine American states make attendance a requirement for obtaining a driver's licence and five states have minimum academic performance standards for initially applying for one.

"Ten states designate truancy or lack of academic progress" as a reason "for suspension of a licence.

"Five states have policies that address both the initial issuance of a driver's licence and the ability of the state to suspend it for academic or attendance reasons, according to the Education Commission of the States," which was consulted by the Ontario government in the drafting of this bill.

It says: "However, the problem with these 'No School, No Wheels' policies is that no one seems prepared to stand up and proclaim that it works.

"Evidence is anecdotal at best and the measures seem to work better in some areas than in others.

"Molly Burke, a researcher for the" Education Commission of the States, "explains why it's difficult to measure the success of the programs.

"We don't often know whether someone came back to school because they lost a driver's licence or got a better teacher," she says," and I'll be referring to that a little later on when I speak.

Secondly, I heard the member for Don Valley West say, "We've got to stop doing more of the same old thing if we want to be successful." I would think the government would want to get at the heart of why students in the current system seem to think the system is failing them so badly that they drop out. I don't for one moment believe that all of those students drop out because they don't value or appreciate learning. This government has done nothing with respect to what those determinants are.

Is the system failing these kids because they didn't get the special education resources that they need? Is the system failing these kids because their parent or parents don't put a value on education? Is the system failing these kids because they're being bullied at school? Maybe we should get to the bottom of some of that.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Thank you. The member for Scarborough Southwest.

**Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti (Scarborough Southwest):** In my brief two minutes, I want to congratulate the minister and the parliamentary assistant on their comments today. I was just looking at Bill 52 today. The preamble speaks quite eloquently of how important our government sees this initiative and wants to see this come through. I just want to read a small section of the preamble: "The people of Ontario and their government:

"Believe that all secondary school pupils deserve a strong education system that provides them with a good outcome and prepares them for a successful future in their destination of choice, whether that is a work placement with training, an apprenticeship, college or university." It goes on further to state other key points.

The last part of the preamble is important because it affirms "that no initiative is more essential to the province's future than a plan that ensures young people keep learning until they graduate or turn 18, whether it is in classroom or through equivalent learning opportunities, such as an apprenticeship or workplace training program." Then it goes on in this bill, of course, to provide the necessary amendments.

I think that this bill is at the very heart of what this government is trying to achieve in terms of providing proper education. I can think of friends of mine, people my age, who have children attending public school, and maybe some of them are going to private school, who want to keep their kids in school. I spoke the other day with a city councillor friend of mine, Gerry Altobello, who wants to keep his young daughter in school until she's 18. Let's say this child wants to leave at an earlier date. This act says, "If you don't want to stay in school after 16, then you can go into some other kind of apprenticeship training or learning program. The same with my brothers and sisters who've got children in schools right now. The kids may want to leave after age 16, but this bill says, "Stay in school until you're 18 or at least find something equivalent." I think it's the right way to go and I support the government and that initiative here today.

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**Mrs. Julia Munro (York North):** Just in the moment I have, I would like to comment very briefly on the issue raised by the member from Don Valley West. In her comments she talked about the importance of establishing a sense of responsibility, and I think all of us would agree that as part of maturation, young people need to understand the consequences of their actions; they need to understand the growing importance, as they mature, of having a sense of responsibility. I think that all of us appreciate the fact that part of that comes from the whole issue of having consequences for your actions.



I find it interesting that the member spoke on this particular issue in the light of the comments made by the minister yesterday in talking about the grades 8-9 transition, because one of the things that I felt was very important in that context was the whole issue around social promotion and the fact that if you are going to be successful in high school, one of the most important features of that is that you are able—that is, you have been successful at the grade 8 level in order to be able to assume that you can then take on the additional complexities of grade 9, of high school. So I think that one of the things this government might want to consider is that part of that responsibility is, of course, the whole area of meeting those standards and being successful at them. That gives everyone the sense of accomplishment. Certainly the individuals who assume that achievement are the students of the future.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Response?

**Hon. Ms. Papatello:** I really am delighted to hear some of the comments that we've heard today in the House, in particular from my parliamentary assistant, Kathleen Wynne, who has done so much work for us on the education files, on a whole number of them. I'm very proud of her work and to be able to work so closely with her. She is a dynamo in education. I have to say that any young person that I am going to meet—it's our responsibility in this Ontario Legislature to make sure every single kid gets an opportunity through our education system to earn a high school diploma. That is the basic minimum. I cannot abide by a comment in this House that is going to be opposed to this legislation, because what that says to me is that they are prepared to sit back and watch our children fail and not be prepared to step forward.

Now, we are a government who watched two different political parties running the education system in Ontario. I have to say that this has not been a part of the agenda in previous governments. I acknowledge that. They had their other priorities. For the Ontario government under Dalton McGuinty, this is the priority. Student achievement is the priority of Dalton McGuinty and that will not change. We are determined to make it work for kids. I could not abide by an individual anywhere in this province not going to our high school system, knowing that we can make the difference in their high school experience. To drag them in and engage them, to make them absolutely love what they are doing, love learning, taking the programs, the new initiatives that are customized, more individualized, with student success leaders who are tracking our kids to make sure they are going forward to graduation. In this day and age it is the bare minimum that we can expect. I will not meet a parent who would not agree that they want the best for their kids, and this bill is going to help us get that.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Further debate.

**Mr. Arnott:** I'm pleased to have the opportunity this evening to speak briefly to Bill 52. I first have to seek unanimous consent of the House to allow us to stand down our leadoff speech so as to allow our critic to do

the leadoff speech when this bill is next debated. So I would ask unanimous consent to stand down our lead-off speech so as to allow our critic to do the lead-off speech when this bill is next debated.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Agreed? Agreed.

**Mr. Arnott:** Members of the House didn't want to hear me for a full hour on this subject and perhaps that enhanced my opportunity to get unanimous consent.

I want to start off this discussion on Bill 52 by relaying to the House some of the comments that I made to the people of Fergus at the opening of the Centre Wellington District High School a few months ago. We were glad that the Premier of Ontario was present for that event, when we opened our new high school in Fergus. If I could just indulge the House for a few minutes with some of the comments I made on that particular day, because I think it's important to start from that point when we talk about education issues as far as I'm concerned, from my perspective as the MPP for Waterloo-Wellington. I said to my constituents: "As the MPP for Waterloo-Wellington, I believe fervently that our education system and everyone in it entrusted with the special responsibility of teaching our children must strive to make our schools not just the best in Canada but the best in the world. We are already blessed with excellence, but the rest of the world is not standing still, and this reality challenges us to continue to build on our strengths and our success if we have any hope of maintaining our economic standing and status as one of the world's most admired, even envied, nations.

"How do we confront this challenge? How do we create a culture of continuous improvement and lifelong learning in our schools? How do we work together to embrace positive change? How do we stretch the available financial resources to address priorities and ensure that money isn't being wasted? How do we measure educational results and outcomes, to be more accountable to the parents and taxpayers in a way that isn't threatening to ourselves but instead identifies positive opportunities for improvement? How do we involve our wider community in constructive and helpful ways to use their talents and expertise to add to our students' school experience? How do we ensure that our very brightest students reach the stratosphere, that the ones in middle find their special talent and follow their dreams and, every bit as importantly, how do we ensure that our students at risk reach their full potential and aren't left behind?

"That last challenge is one of the hardest and the one with the greatest consequences for our whole society if it's overlooked."

I was pleased that the Premier was there to hear me give this speech to the people who were assembled at the opening of the high school because I believe these are important questions that need to be responded to by all of us in terms of our approach to education issues, and I think the Premier was pleased with what I said. Obviously I was pleased that he was there and approached my comments in a non-partisan way.



I would have to start my comments by asking whether or not Bill 52 in any way answers these questions, and I would say that the government's goal of reducing the dropout rate, of course, is something that all of us in this House support. We want to see more kids complete their high school education so that they're better prepared and better equipped to go out into the world, whether it be for post-secondary education at college or university, skilled trades training or the world of work. Obviously those are goals that we all share, and we would want to support policies which in fact lead to the outcome of a reduced dropout rate, diminishing to zero.

I was a little bit disappointed with the Minister of Education's response to a couple of questions I posed when I had my chance through the questions-and-comments phase after her speech. The government, when this bill was first introduced, indicated that the dropout rate in Ontario was 30%, and yet approximately three days after the bill was introduced, Statistics Canada released data showing that Ontario's true dropout rate was less than 10%, not 30%. I'm not trying to understate the severity of the problem. It just appeared that the government was using an inflated number in an attempt to justify this particular bill, of course, and this bill, I have to say, is quite punitive in its approach in the sense of taking away a young person's driver's licence if they quit school between 16 and 18 and they have a driver's licence. It's something that is the subject of some debate in this House and in the media, which I'll get into later on in my comments.

Again, I would suggest that in the comments that have been brought forward so far by the government they've talked about some of the wonderful things they see themselves as doing to reduce the dropout rate, but they haven't really focused on the punitive aspect that has been universally criticized by even some people in teachers' unions who have said it's not workable and is probably wrong-headed.

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The Education Act, through Bill 52, is intended to be amended to raise the compulsory school attendance age from 16 to 18 and to enable the development of learning opportunities for pupils who fall outside the instruction traditionally provided by a board. This is termed as "equivalent learning" in the act.

The Highway Traffic Act is amended, through Bill 52, to authorize the making of regulations that would require persons who are under 18 years old to be in compliance with section 21 of the Education Act, compulsory attendance until age 18, in order to apply for any class or level of driver's licence or for an endorsement on their driver's licence, or to take practical or written examination in respect of a driver's licence or endorsement. In simple language, this means that if you're not in school until age 18 and you have a driver's licence, you may lose your driver's licence if you quit school, or you may not even be given the opportunity to try to acquire a driver's licence if you're not in school until age 18. The bill has a number of other amendments that affect this act.

I would have to say in response that our caucus has taken a strong position. We have responded to this bill by saying the McGuinty government is once again proposing legislation without consideration for its practical implications. This is a pattern that we have seen on a number of bills through the course of the last number of months. It would appear that the burden and the cost of enforcement for this legislation falls on school boards and the Ministry of Transportation. I don't think the government has fully considered the impact on families who rely on their young family members, in some cases, for transportation due to circumstances which might exist in that particular household. The government certainly has not considered the effects in rural and northern Ontario, where there is no public transit in many, many cases; there are no alternative forms of transportation or it may be very limited, and the ability of young family members to drive may be very integral to their daily life.

I don't believe the government has considered the financial implications for students, who may depend on their ability to drive to keep their part-time or summer employment. I think back to my own experience. When I was 16 or 17 years old, I was employed at the L&M Food Markets in Arthur. I worked at the grocery store, and I did deliveries. I had my driver's licence, and I was given the opportunity to deliver groceries to people's homes. That was my part-time job for a couple of years when I was in high school.

**Mrs. Liz Sandals (Guelph-Wellington):** Did you drop out, Ted?

**Mr. Arnott:** No, I didn't drop out. I had the opportunity to continue through to grade 13 at the Arthur District High School, and I was pleased to have had that opportunity.

I don't believe the government has considered the implications for businesses which would typically employ students. It is an offence under the legislation, Bill 52, to employ someone during school hours if the employee is under 18 and hasn't graduated from high school. Teenagers who drop out of school, usually the most alienated and troubled kids, will find they cannot even get a driver's licence, if Bill 52 is passed in its current form unamended.

The legislation also wrongly puts the focus, in my opinion, on coercion of students rather than putting it on motivation, the improvement of curriculum and providing practical alternatives for students who are not academically focused. The legislation ignores the fact that there are many personal and unique circumstances in students' lives that may require a temporary or longer-term alternative to the traditional school environment.

I would say that we have a concern on this side of the House that the McGuinty government has misrepresented the Ontario dropout rate, no doubt, we believe, for—

**The Deputy Speaker:** I would ask the member to withdraw "misrepresented" and perhaps phrase it a different way.

**Mr. Arnott:** I believe that the government, in terms of its presentation—I would withdraw, first of all, Mr.



Speaker. I apologize. I didn't want to offend you or anybody else in this House with my characterization of what has happened. But, again, it is my understanding that the government has been saying that there is a 30% dropout rate, yet Statistics Canada says it's 10%. So if it's not that, I'm not sure what it is, but certainly we need to have some explanation which reconciles those two numbers. I think Statistics Canada is considered to be a fairly credible organization for bringing forward these statistics. Clearly, we need some explanation in this House. The former minister, the member for Parkdale-High Park, has used that 30% figure as justification for this legislation, which we would call into question.

The Statistics Canada study further calls into question the former minister's scheme to suspend the drivers' licences of high school students between 16 and 18 who drop out of or are truant from school. On this side of House, we believe the McGuinty Liberal government is once again encroaching on the personal lives of Ontario families. The decision concerning whether or not the privilege to hold a driver's licence is a condition of school attendance should be left to parents.

This legislation, in sum, is punitive, impractical, unenforceable and may very well be found to be discriminatory under the age provisions of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms if it is challenged through the courts. I don't know if the government has any legal opinion from the Attorney General as to whether or not this bill conforms with the charter of rights. If they do, they haven't talked about it as of yet, to the best of my knowledge. I would challenge them to table any legal opinions they may have as to whether or not this conforms with the charter of rights. I suspect there's a good chance it will be challenged at some point through the courts, and it may very well be found to be unconstitutional.

I want to inform the House of some of the press reaction to this Bill 52, because I think it's very important. We have compiled a list of clippings here that are, in most cases, critical of the bill and its approach.

Starting back to when the bill was first introduced, there was an article in the *Toronto Star*—interesting—on December 14, 2005. It was by Rob Ferguson of the *Toronto Star*. There are a number of interesting quotes in it, but most interesting for me was the quote by Rhonda Kimberley-Young, president of the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation.

Ms. Kimberley-Young was quoted in the *Toronto Star*, just before Christmas, as saying that "restricting access to driver's licences is worrisome...."

"I expect there will be young people who do see it as punitive," she said, predicting troubled students in rural areas will be harder hit than urban teens because there is no public transit to rely on."

She continued on, saying, "I think the risks are the uneven impact."

The minister is quoted in the article as saying that "he is not worried about the law being challenged under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms," but again, when you

hear the head of the OSSTF expressing concerns and reservations, it's something this government normally would not dismiss, coming from one of the senior voices in the teachers' federation.

When we look through some of these other articles, we find some more interesting quotes and comments. From the *Kitchener-Waterloo Record*, which is one of the most important daily newspapers in my area, Waterloo-Wellington, there is an article by Luisa D'Amato. There were parts of it that drew my attention. There was a quote from Annie Kidder, who is the head of People for Education. Annie Kidder, of course, has had a great deal of influence with this current government in terms of its education policy, and is someone the government has looked to to speak in public about its education policies in an effort to bolster public support for what they're doing. Annie Kidder says this about the provision in Bill 52 involving driver's licences:

"Today's announcement about drivers' licences and new laws does nothing for the students who are currently in school without a hope of graduating," she said. "The students who are struggling are not dropouts. They're trying to graduate but they do not have appropriate curriculum or sufficient course choices."

"She also noted that Premier Dalton McGuinty promised this fall to introduce an alternative secondary school diploma that gives prominence to the ability to develop a skill or trade. That promise is nowhere to be seen in the new legislation, she charged.

"Ontario has an official dropout rate of about 30%"—according to this article—"which the government hopes to cut in half to 15% by 2010."

I think this article came out before—yes, it did—the Statistics Canada report came out, which called into question the numbers the government was using.

Here again we have one of the Ontario residents who has had a lot to say about education policy in recent years, Annie Kidder, being critical of Bill 52.

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We carry on here to a clipping that was in the *Owen Sound Sun-Times* on December 16. I know that our member, the member for Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound, has been vocal on this issue and has talked about the impact this bill will have if there are no changes, if there are no amendments through the public hearings process, and the negative impact this bill will have on rural Ontario in particular. I would read from this opinion and analysis piece in the *Owen Sound Sun Times*:

"See how the other measures work before introducing the driving penalty. It's a heavy hand that would force Ontario teenagers to stay in school or deny them their right to drive. And it's probably not necessary, at least not yet. And, even then, it probably wouldn't work.

"But earlier this week, the provincial Liberals introduced legislation that would force youths under 18 to prove they are an active student in order to get their driver's licence. Those students who drop out before graduating or turning 18 could be punished by being refused a licence to drive, or by having a licence already in their possession suspended.



"The idea, of course, is to cut Ontario's dismal high school dropout rate..., which is a good idea, a noble goal and all of that. But the driving penalty is questionable.

"To the Liberals' credit, this measure wouldn't take effect in Ontario until schools establish a wider array of courses and add more co-op and apprenticeship programs to keep at-risk students in class. These classroom changes would be mandated under the proposed bill, which includes the driving penalty for truants. Wouldn't it make more sense, however, to see how the other measures work before even introducing the driving penalty?

"Ontario teenagers drop out of high school for a variety of reasons, ranging from disinterest in the curriculum to an inability to comprehend it. Like everybody, teenagers are also a product of their environment. If their friends don't think a good education is important, and if their parents don't think so either, would they believe it?"

This is interesting commentary on this particular bill, calling into question whether or not it makes sense to have this punitive measure in the legislation.

I'm hopeful that the government is listening to some of this reaction in the province, and I'm hopeful that the government will bring forward amendments to this bill to respond to this criticism in an appropriate way and improve the legislation by removing this provision that so many people find objectionable, even people who have tended to align themselves with the government in a public way and support them on so many other issues.

Now, on December 17, one of the most significant daily newspapers in the province of Ontario, the Toronto Star, in its—no, this is a letter to the editor, I should say, that was published in the Toronto Star from Patrick Rutledge, trustee, ward 22 in Toronto. He says this:

"I found the Education Minister's attempts at motivating students to stay in school a little ill-informed. I have the rather unique position of being a high school dropout who has returned to university at age 45 and also serving as a trustee on the Toronto District School Board. I have been asked a lot about the Ontario government's attempts at keeping kids in school and I was struck by how out of touch people are about what motivates one to stay in school and what the reasons are for leaving.

"First, why do students leave? There are many reasons. Some students need to leave because school is just not working for them and they have to get out and try to figure life out. This was my experience. For others it could be an abusive home life, bullying and harassment, not connecting with teachers or with the curriculum or any other combination of these and other reasons.

"That is what is so frustrating about the minister's proposal to deny driver's licences to kids who drop out. Losing a privilege is not what will motivate dropouts to stay in school.

"Two reports done in the last year, the Early Leavers Report from Dr. Bruce Ferguson of Sick Kids Hospital and the TDSB's Stop The World, I Want To Get On"—and I'm sure the member for Don Valley West is familiar with that particular study—"detail the experiences of students who are thinking of dropping out or already

have. In their responses lie some of the solutions. The single biggest factor is whether a student establishes a meaningful relationship with a teacher. This is the number one indicator for why kids are successful and is the determining factor for them sticking it out. Second is the teacher's ability to make school relevant.

"I would never tell anyone contemplating leaving school that it is a good choice. I would only say that for me, it was the right thing to do. If they do choose to leave, we should be open and ready to make it easier for them to return to school, whether it be adult education, college or university, and we must be willing to provide them with support to be successful. That is the kind of incentive that will encourage people, not withdrawing the privilege of driving."

Again, that's Patrick Rutledge who is a school board trustee for the Toronto District School Board, someone who has gone through the experience of dropping out of school and has returned to formal education later on in his life.

So I would ask the government to consider all of these thoughts over the course of its consideration of Bill 52, and I hope we will see amendments coming forward that will reflect many of these concerns.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Questions and comments?

**Ms. Martel:** I appreciate the comments that were made by the member for Waterloo-Wellington. I want to focus first on his comments about dropout rates, because he did reference both what the minister had to say and then after that the statistics that appeared from Statistics Canada, which I saw as well. I also want to read into the record comments that were made by a trustee from the Thames Valley board, who said the following:

"The problem for schools and boards, however, is they don't know their dropout rates.

"In fact, they'd like to know how the province comes up with its figures, said Thames Valley operations superintendent John Thorpe.

"I'd love to have numbers like they do. I just don't know where they get them," he said.

"It's impossible to tell which students leave school because they're truly dropping out and which are moving, he said." That came from the London Free Press, Wednesday, January 4, written by Kate Dubinski.

So when we question the government's numbers with respect to dropout rates, I think there's a legitimate reason why we do that, and I'm glad the member from Waterloo-Wellington talked about the statistics from StatsCan to point that out as well.

Secondly, I appreciated him reading into the record the letter that was done by a school trustee, Mr. Rutledge, from TDSB. I listened to the Liberals tonight talk about how it's their responsibility to make sure kids get an education. Well, do you know what? If there are kids out there who don't want to get an education for whatever reason, then maybe we'd better be looking at why that is and how we can support them in other decisions they are making.



I said earlier and I'll say it again: I don't believe for one moment that the kids who are dropping out are doing so because they don't value education or don't understand how necessary it's going to be for them in their future. They're dropping out for all kinds of reasons—stuff that's going on at home that could be unspeakable, lack of parental support for the value of school period, bullying at school, racism at school, any number of factors. For us to stand here and say it's our obligation to make sure we make sure kids go through school is really silly. It's our responsibility to support all of these kids who are having difficulties.

**Ms. Wynne:** There are so many reasons that members on all sides of this House should be supporting this initiative. On the issue of the dropout rate, I would point the member for Waterloo–Wellington and the member for Nickel Belt to Dr. Alan King of Queen's University, who has done some groundbreaking research on this issue and on the statistics around the dropout rate, and some of the discoveries he made around the math program that had been put in place by the previous government and the really detrimental effect that the early high school math program was having on students, discouraging them in grades 9 and 10, leading to a very high dropout rate, including the punitive literacy test as it was first implemented by the previous government. We've already started to change some of those things to help kids be able to have an applied math program that actually works for them. We've started to change those things. That's how the graduation rate is improving.

As far as the driver's licence and the punitive measure comments, there's a very small number of students who would be affected by actually losing their driver's licence or not being allowed to have their driver's licence. The point is that there's no student in this province, whether they have had a bad experience at school or not, who doesn't need some support if they're on the brink of dropping out. The driver's licence piece has focused the discussion. It is not going to be put in place until the programs that support the students are there. The previous minister said that over and over again when he made the initial announcements. So there's no expectation on our part that the driver's licence punishment is going to be an incentive to keep kids in school; it's a consequence.

What's really important about this legislation and why you should be supporting it is the programs we're putting in place.

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**Mr. John O'Toole (Durham):** I commend the member from Waterloo–Wellington. It was a very balanced response to a government bill that's been questioned by many. I know he has a serious commitment to education, and quality education in the public system, I might add. I believe his wife's a teacher.

Many members here like to streamline—characterize us in negative terms. My wife is a teacher. We're proud parents of five children, and there are always different needs with each child. Having spent two or three terms as a school trustee, trying to find ways to deal with school-

leaving and truancy at the board level, I'd say that I kind of support the preamble, the explanatory note here. It's changing "the compulsory school attendance age from 16 to 18 and to enable the development of learning opportunities for pupils that fall outside" the traditional model of providing that.

David Lindsay, the executive director of the college system, has provided some input. He's probably written to all the members here. They're up, ready and willing, I believe, to provide an alternative structure, providing opportunities in skilled trades and other innovative ways that are a departure from the traditional up-to-grade-12 model today. That's really what's needed, some innovation—breaking away from the traditional 9 to 4. There were a lot of students I talked to for whom getting to school early and those kinds of things just don't suit their lifestyle.

The point has been made as well that they all realize the importance—it's a knowledge-based economy, and they need to find the niche that's comfortable for them. As a parent whose children are through the post-secondary system, and listening to the member from Waterloo–Wellington, who is a parent with children in the current system, we want to make improvements that work for children, not just for the unions.

**Mr. Jeff Leal (Peterborough):** I did listen very carefully to the remarks from my colleague from Waterloo–Wellington. It seems to me that from time to time there are issues that are less partisan than others, and I think this is an issue that is. We could spend some time this evening on statistics for the level of dropout rates. We know that there is a group that is dropping out of the school system; we know that for sure. What we have to do collectively as legislators is find a way for these people to get back in the system and complete their education.

Like the member from Durham and the member from Waterloo–Wellington, my wife teaches grade 8. She's actually departing tomorrow to take her grade 8 students for a tour of Ottawa. I have a son who's eight and a daughter who's six. They're both in French immersion in St. Anne's in Peterborough. One of the things we can accomplish collectively is to make sure that we have an education system in Ontario that allows my six-year-old and my eight-year-old and those other eight-year-olds and six-year-olds across the province to have the opportunity to go through the school system to achieve their legitimate goals and pursue their dreams and their careers.

As I said, this is an opportunity to cater and design an approach for those individuals—who, for a whole number of reasons, have become somewhat disenchanted perhaps with the academic side of the education system—to have the chance to get a diploma. In fact, many of those careers one pursues outside of community college or university are actually gold-collar careers that have the economic potential and earning power to make far more than we who are in this chamber this evening. The key is to find that structure that will encourage—



**The Deputy Speaker:** Thank you. The member from Waterloo—Wellington has two minutes to respond.

**Mr. Arnott:** I want to thank the member for Nickel Belt, the member for Don Valley West, the member for Durham and the member for Peterborough for responding to my presentation this evening. None of them were particularly critical about what I had to say, but the member for Don Valley West pointed out her view that the number of students who might lose their drivers' licences as a result of Bill 52 would be a relatively small number, and she said that the driver's licence punishment would not come into effect until after the government's programs are put into place.

That being the case and that being the stated position of the government by the former minister and by her, as the parliamentary assistant, let's see an amendment to the bill that ensures that that will be the case. Perhaps you can take that part of the bill right out, and then, if need be, bring forward another bill later on.

I'm looking forward to hearing another presentation tonight by one of my colleagues, the member for York North, who has no small amount of information to give to the House. In fact, it wasn't that long ago that I was reading a copy of the Professionally Speaking magazine, which is the magazine of the Ontario College of Teachers. I was very, very interested to see the quotes by Tyler Stewart, a musician who's well known in many circles in this province as a member of the Barenaked Ladies. He talked about the most important teacher that he'd ever had during his education in the public system, and it was Mrs. Julia Munro. He talked about what a wonderful teacher she was, how much she had influenced his life and given him the encouragement and the aspiration to become what he is now: a world-famous rock star; a very, very creative young man. I am sure it was in no small part due—and that's what he said—to the outstanding education he had from Mrs. Munro.

I want to congratulate the member for York North for all that she's done in her private career before she came in here. We look forward to her presentation. I would encourage the government to listen to her.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Further debate?

**Ms. Martel:** On that last point, I hope Ms. Munro gets free tickets to some of these concerts as a result. I'd sure be after that if I could.

Speaker, I need to ask for unanimous consent to defer our leadoff because our critic is in committee right now.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is there unanimous consent for deferral? How do we stand? It is agreed.

**Ms. Martel:** I want to raise three concerns tonight with respect to the bill that's before us. First, I want to deal with the main changes that are being made to the Education Act, specifically changing the compulsory age from 16 to 18, but also to talk about these new programs—equivalent learning—that appear in the act. Secondly, I want to say a little bit about the bill as it ties young people under age 18 to be in compliance with the new section 21 of the act—that's the compulsory age—until 18 in order to apply for any class or level of driver's

licence. Third, I want to have a bit of a discussion about kids who are home-schooled, and the concerns that are facing them. I have been made aware of this by some of my relatives, and I understand the government hasn't responded to these concerns at all.

Let me first deal with the new programs the government is talking about, the equivalent learning as it appears in the bill. It's interesting. If you look at the explanatory notes, it says: "The minister may establish policies and guidelines with respect to equivalent learning. Boards would be required to implement any relevant guidelines. Both the minister and boards may enter into agreements with other parties regarding the provision of equivalent learning to board pupils."

My first question is: Who's paying for the programs? Who is paying for all of these new and wonderful programs that the government says are just going to keep kids in school and stop them from dropping out? As I look through the bill, I don't see any provisions regarding funding of these programs. I don't see any mention at all that, as these programs are developed, the Ministry of Education is going to fund the necessary monies to the school boards across the province of Ontario to support these programs. Indeed, I don't see any mention that there's going to be a change in the funding formula to ensure that the money is there to develop all these new and wonderful programs that are going to be so helpful to the kids who are thinking of dropping out.

So my first concern is, here we go again with the government with a lot of rhetoric about new programs, a new mandate, a new responsibility for boards—because it is going to be a new responsibility for boards—and what is null and void is any mention of the necessary funding that of course would be required if you're actually going to develop, establish and maintain some of the new programs that the government is talking about. Whether that be in the school setting, or whether that be through the agreements that the minister has talked about that the ministry may develop with colleges and universities, that the ministry may develop with community organizations etc., someone's got to pay for this. I haven't seen the government step up to the plate yet in anything that they've said about this bill to indicate that the equivalent learning, the new programs, are going to be fully funded by this government.

My second and third concerns actually go back to something that OSSTF talked about, because I noticed some members quoted OSSTF but they didn't quote the concerns that OSSTF has already submitted in its preliminary draft on this bill to the Ministry of Education. The first concern from OSSTF, which is also a concern that I have, was just what these new programs are going to look like, who's going to be responsible and who's going to develop them.

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So in their draft submission to the ministry, I quote as follows:

"It is the details of these 'equivalent learning' establishments which causes considerable concern for OSSTF members. We note that acceptable learning locations will



be further defined in ministry and board policies and guidelines, which are subject to much less scrutiny than regulation"—or legislation for that matter. "Who will set the standards and requirements for the board policies? Who will approve the providers of equivalent learning and their courses or programs? We are also very concerned that the requirements for achieving secondary school credits will be watered down."

And of course those are concerns that have yet to be answered and certainly weren't answered here this evening, but they are very legitimate concerns regarding these new equivalent learning programs.

Here's the next concern, and it has to do with what the government is going to use as a model for these programs. I said earlier I heard the minister talk about post-secondary and agreements with colleges. I find that hard to imagine. If a student is thinking about dropping out of high school, I find it hard to imagine they're going to want to go to a post-secondary or college institution in order to further their education. This doesn't make sense to me. I really don't see the likelihood of partnerships in that regard.

Now, perhaps there are going to be partnerships with community organizations. Let's look at two provinces that have done some of this work before in terms of having equivalent credits for secondary school credits—two provinces. Let me reference them, and this comes from the OSSTF brief again:

"Two other provinces recognize equivalent credentials for secondary school credits. The most clear-cut examples may be found in British Columbia, where the official list of course codes for secondary" school "credit includes a number of provincially recognized external credits. BC developed its program between 1997 and 2001.... In BC, the Ministry of Education centrally evaluates these courses, ensuring that there is documented systematic learning that can equate to appropriate subject areas in the curriculum. While 81 out of 408 listed courses that count for a BC secondary diploma are external credit courses, almost half of them are in music, dance or fine arts, only 12 in applied skills areas such as first aid instructor, ground search and rescue, Outward Bound, pony club or Red Cross swimming instructor, and only three in technical subjects (wood-working and tourism). Almost none of these credentials are likely to be obtained by students at risk."

And that's really a key point, because with the majority of the courses that you're talking about—and BC is the one model you might look to because they have equivalency learning now—most of the students we're talking about who are at risk probably don't have a parent or parents who can afford to enrol them in music, dance or fine arts, so the thought that we are going to find a broad range of courses out in the community that are going to work for the students who are most at risk—it's something that I just don't think is going to happen very easily at all. And, as OSSTF says:

"Therefore their usefulness as a model for the Ontario program (except perhaps for adult students) is severely limited.

"British Columbia also allows students to take post-secondary courses and count them towards secondary school graduation.... It is also of very limited value for encouraging students under 18 to stay in school, since teenagers do not normally drop out in order to go into post-secondary studies!"

That's why I question what the Minister of Education had to say tonight in terms of her making the argument here that the ministry was going to enter into partnerships with colleges and universities with respect to equivalency learning. I don't think kids who are dropping out of high school are then going to be bound for college and university. I just don't think that's going to happen.

**Ms. Wynne:** You may be wrong about that.

**Ms. Martel:** I may be wrong, but we'll wait and see. I don't think I am. I think there are reasons that they're dropping out of the education system, and hoping that they're going to go to college where requirements might be even stricter, or university where requirements certainly will be stricter, is a little hard to fathom.

The other jurisdiction that has equivalent learning, so could be used as a model, is Newfoundland. Here again, OSSTF said the following:

"Newfoundland, the only other province to recognize external credentials, recognizes courses taken through air cadets, army cadets and sea cadets as well as Royal Conservatory of Music courses. Again, there is little to be learned here in terms of attracting students to stay in school in Ontario until age 18. While admittedly Ontario students are allowed to count the highest Royal Conservatory of Music achievement for a high school credit, the students who have taken years of music lessons are usually university-bound and not the target clientele for student success initiatives." I think OSSTF has hit the nail on the head.

So we look forward to seeing who the Ministry of Education is going to partner up with in terms of delivering these programs, but I've got to tell you, I have serious concerns, because nowhere in what we've heard today has the ministry confirmed that it is going to fund these programs with new funding being allocated to school boards in the province and not instead require school boards to take this money out of the scarce resources they already have. Secondly, there has been no mention about who is going to be responsible, and how, for dealing with who determines if these scenarios and situations are appropriate for equivalency learning. That was a concern that OSSTF raised. And I agree with OSSTF in terms of their third concern, about what model you are going to use. The models that are already in place in two jurisdictions have pretty well shown that the target clientele—the kids who are dropping out, the kids who are disadvantaged, the kids who don't want to be in a classroom—don't want to be in any of these other programs either, and the programs are not very likely to meet their needs.

Those are the concerns that I want to raise with respect to the new programs that the ministry says are going to be so effective in attracting kids and keeping them in school.



Secondly, I want to look at the second part of the bill, which is the tying of the driver's licence to staying in school. I want to begin with the US situation, which of course is one that the Minister of Education referenced. I think it would be incumbent upon me to give some additional details, because I think some were lacking in the presentation that she made with respect to what goes on in US jurisdictions.

Let me begin with this. It was printed in the *Toronto Star*, Sunday, December 18, and written by Tim Harper:

"Tomorrow, some 2.7 million American students who should be in the classroom will be somewhere else.

"More than three in 10 American students who enter grade 9 will not complete high school—and only half of the black, Latino and native Indian students will graduate.

"In the south, dropouts are three times more likely to be imprisoned, and represent \$29.7 billion in lost wages per year.

"In the US capital, 15% of high school students are truant on any given day.

"To combat hard-core dropouts and truants, local and state boards of education have been getting tough and creative....

"Some 23 US states have some type of policy connecting student attendance or achievement to the privilege of driving."

I named nine states that have some requirements around drivers' licences, 10 that designate truancy or a lack of academic progress as a cause for suspension of a licence, and five states have policies that address both the initial issuance of a driver's licence and the ability of the state to suspend it for academic or attendance reasons.

I think what was key and what the minister neglected to mention is that, according to the Education Commission of the States, and I'm going to quote Molly Burke, who is a researcher for the commission:

"We often don't know whether someone came back to school because they lost a driver's licence or got a better teacher. Evidence is anecdotal at best, and the measures seem to work better in some areas than in others."

"'It often doesn't work in urban areas,' said Burke. 'You just get students saying, 'I wasn't going to drive anyway.''"

"In a study provided to Ontario officials"—when they were considering this mechanism—"Burke was blunt, appearing more hopeful than definitive.

"'Little research has been completed on the effects these types of laws have on truancy or dropout rates,' she wrote, 'but state policy-makers should consider that, for many teenagers, driving is real currency.'"

I'm not sure why the government is referencing what's going on in the States if this is the kind of information that was given to the government—and it's clear that it was—when they were developing this bill. The Education Commission of the States made it very clear that there was no evidence to show that these kinds of measures, tying drivers' licences to compulsory attendance at school or to truancy rates, really worked in

getting those kids back to school. So why are we heading down a path where there has been some experience with this model and where, at best, the experience about whether or not it worked is anecdotal? I don't understand why we're going down this path, especially when the commission gave information to the Ministry of Education in Ontario about these programs and about how their effectiveness was anecdotal at best.

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Let me quote some other folks with respect to this tying of the driver's licence to staying in school until age 18. The *Toronto Star* said the following on Sunday, December 18:

"The Ontario government is taking the right step by making it compulsory for all students to remain in school ... but the legislation contains several controversial provisions the government should consider dropping.

"First, any student who leaves school before 18 would be denied a driver's licence." That's in the legislation.

"Second, students and parents could be fined up to \$1,000 for chronic absenteeism, while employers could face similar fines for putting students to work during school hours.

"Kennedy fails to provide any evidence that such coercive steps actually result in students remaining in classes any longer. Without some indication that it works in other jurisdictions"—and we don't have this from the US—"Kennedy needs to rethink this idea."

From the *National Post*, December 15:

"Trying to keep 16- or 17-year-olds in school is a worthy objective, but only if the students understand the value of an education and are there willingly. Mr. Kennedy surely knows this, which makes his plan all the more contemptible. In return for a few headlines, he is evidently willing to make matters worse for dropouts and committed students alike."

The last one I want to read into the record comes from a grade 12 student from Simcoe. His name is Nathan Lachowsky. He's the president of the executive council of the Ontario Student Trustees' Association. He wrote this in the *Globe and Mail* on Tuesday, December 20, 2005:

"Education is lifelong, and the longer that students stay in school the better prepared they become for life. But, in proposing to connect a high school diploma with the right to drive, Ontario is travelling too far over the edge of reason.

"Gerard Kennedy, Ontario's Minister of Education, proposed last week that the province revoke the driver's licences of students who drop out of high school before 18. The 'Learning to 18' initiative would also force 16- and 17-year-olds to prove that they are still in school before being allowed to get a driver's licence.

"While the work the education ministry has done to keep students engaged and interested in high school is commendable, this step is an unnecessary infringement upon the lives of Ontario adolescents. If you have to enforce staying in school with such punitive measures, then there is something really wrong with the system.



The government should find better ways to encourage students, instead of scaring them into their own education.

"Mr. Kennedy has certainly succeeded at finding something close to the hearts of young people. Our first step towards independence and adulthood is being able to drive and controlling our transportation and life. It is something we look forward to for years. Students are angry and shocked by this plan. They cannot believe that their education should be tied to their ability to drive.

"While students who are academically successful are somewhat more supportive of the initiative, those students who aren't as successful in the system feel that it creates negative pressure. This proposal is especially unfair to students who suffer from learning disabilities or have difficulties in the classroom setting.

"Those who can't, or choose not to, succeed at school would lose so many other options by not being able to drive. Without a licence, they won't be able to transport themselves to and from work or hold delivery jobs. Without transportation, they lose social and economic activities."

The third concern I want to raise in the time I have remaining has to do with concerns raised by the Ontario Federation of Teaching Parents. My cousins, Alan and Rachel Ross, home-school their eight-year-old son Justin. They raised these concerns with me some time ago and I want to put them on the record tonight. This is from the website of the Ontario Federation of Teaching Parents:

"Bill 52 and home schooling:

"When the bill was introduced in mid-December 2005, the Ontario Federation of Teaching Parents sent a letter to the education minister (at that time, Gerard Kennedy—the current minister is Sandra Pupatello) to ask how the act might affect home-schoolers and to request a meeting to discuss our concerns. As of the end of May 2006, we have not received a reply."

On the website, dated April 3, is a list of their concerns and I want to read these quickly into the record. This is what the OFTP urges with respect to the government and this bill:

"(1) Amend Bill 52 or abandon it altogether. To implement under existing legislation a modified plan to provide more access and recognition of non-traditional learning opportunities. Promotion of the above alternative process of recommendation would accommodate and support more young people than would a narrowing of non-traditional options into those considered to be equivalent learning for the purposes of receiving an Ontario secondary school diploma.

"(2) Abandon plans to raise the compulsory school age to 18.

"We urge the government to recognize instead that young adults over 16 are at an age to be treated with increased respect for their personal choices and granted more leeway for their growing independence and autonomy; that, given financial and moral support and practical means, they will gladly attend learning environments that support and cater to their individual

strengths, needs and interests; and that such opportunities should be provided by the government as a service rather than imposed as a legal requirement. We affirm that learning can be effectively validated and supported without excessive regulation ....

"(3) Abandon any plans to link school attendance and drivers' licences.

"We believe the education system cannot 'instill in young people a lasting, positive attitude toward learning' by imposing sanctions through coercive and restrictive legislation.

"We urge the government to recognize that linking drivers' licences to school attendance is a punitive measure, unfair in its incongruity, and oversteps the boundaries of the state into the private affairs of individuals."

Finally, "(4) Consult with dropouts, potential dropouts, and home-schoolers, to gain a better understanding of the complexity and diversity of reasons for leaving school and the solutions that would genuinely and supportively change the motivation or ability to stay.

"We believe that genuine motivation is self-motivation arising out of a desire to learn and reach goals, not out of fear of coercion or punitive legislation," and they go on to state what is required.

Those are the concerns that I want to raise here this evening with respect to this legislation. I would certainly encourage the government to finally acquiesce to the request for a meeting that has been made for a number of months now by the Ontario Federation of Teaching Parents. I think they have a lot to offer by way of information and advice, and I hope the minister would at least listen to them.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Questions and comments?

**Ms. Wynne:** I'd like to comment on the remarks by the member for Nickel Belt. First of all, I did mention in my remarks the Student Success Commission. She raised the issue of whether some of the programs and some of the options and initiatives that we want to put in place will actually work, and concerns on the part of some of the teachers. The Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation is sitting on the Student Success Commission, having that conversation with boards and ministries, to figure out how to work out some of the nuances around the new programs and dual credits and so on. So that is happening and that is a very strong initiative. I would ask that the member for Nickel Belt talk to some of her friends in the OSSTF and find out how they feel about that.

Secondly, new money for these initiatives; there are millions of dollars going into this initiative: \$45 million for technological education already; \$36 million for the lighthouse programs from which we've taken some of the initiatives and the successes. There are 800 student success teachers already in the system. Programs mean having teachers. If we're going to have new programs, we have to have new teachers, new adults in the schools to run those programs. That's the most important component of setting up a new program. So there are already 800 student success teachers in the system and another



300 going into the system this year. Those teachers are the drivers of the new programs and they are there.

I would suggest that the member for Nickel Belt talk to some of the teachers on the ground to see how they feel about the initiatives we've put in place, because what I'm hearing from the schools and teachers in my area is that we're in very good shape in terms of putting those programs in place. That means that the new money is working.

Finally, I just wanted to say that I certainly am very aware of the home-schoolers' concerns. I have had an initial conversation with some of the folks in the Mennonite community who have some similar concerns. Those are not issues that are going to be shoved aside. There will be a conversation. I can't say exactly when that is going to happen, but as I say, I have had an initial conversation with some of the folks from the Mennonite Central Committee.

**Mr. O'Toole:** It's a pleasure to listen and respond to the member from Nickel Belt. She certainly does her homework. I'll just respond to a couple of things on the research she has done. Our critic, Frank Klees, will be speaking on this issue, as will Julia Munro, the member from York North. They also have an understanding and interest in this area, as most of us do.

The member from Nickel Belt raises two or three very good points. The work done by OSSTF needs to be respected. I understand and endorse that. I probably would go so far as to say that even the suggestion of cadets is something that, if that's what suits—I was at a cadet parade this past weekend and am going to one this weekend. They do learn a lot of nautical and aeronautical skills. Their skill base may not be the traditional type, but there's discipline involved in it, there's compliance involved and there's structure involved. Other than not being in school, I think those are worthy considerations as parallel credits.

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I think the punitive part, the driver's licence issue as a way of pressuring or leveraging some compliance, is a negative thing. I wonder how they'll get out of that, because in rural Ontario, as the point has been made by the member from Nickel Belt, and certainly in my riding of Durham, people living in most of it are not serviced by public transit. Most of them do have jobs on other farms or in small towns, in close villages. In fact, some of them are in trades all the way through.

If you look at the success of the Newfoundland program—and I'd say that one of the things that I think worked well when we were in government was OYAP, the Ontario youth apprenticeship program, and its great success of linkage with children who are going to the world of work and trades. That program should be looked at. Working together with trade unions: The non-traditional provision of service, working in partnership with trade unions, might be a very good bridge to reality.

So there are innovative things. I think the member from Nickel Belt has done some homework, and I appreciated her comments.

**Mr. Berardinetti:** I do appreciate the comments made by the member from Nickel Belt.

I have a few comments again about what our government is trying to achieve here. The McGuinty government has clearly launched a very aggressive program here to make student success a key in the educational program overall.

We've had various phases in the past few years brought into being and announced. Phase 1 of the student success strategy was introduced back in 2003, and it already has yielded a number of results: Student success leaders are implemented at every school board; there's been a 3% rise in high school graduation rates, from 68% to 71%; over 82%, or 14,000 students enrolled in 105 lighthouse pilot projects, have successfully acquired their course credit; \$45 million has been invested into technological education; and six new locally developed compulsory credit courses have been done. So this is the first phase.

The second phase, it's important to reiterate, was launched in May 2005 and added further results.

Phase 3 is currently under way. That new phase 3 allows for new specialist high skills majors in the Ontario secondary school diploma that will allow students to complete a minimum bundle of courses in specific high-skills areas. It also has new dual credit programs to allow students to earn several credits towards an OSSD through post-secondary and apprenticeship courses. The key, again, is that there's a combination here of education as well as apprenticeship.

I think it needs to be reiterated that we have committed by investing \$1.3 billion in a three-phase program to ambitiously and effectively get our students into school programs and either involved in education or apprenticeship programs till age 18. I support that very much.

**Mrs. Munro:** In the few moments that I have, I'd like to comment on those remarks made by the member from Nickel Belt.

I think all of us recognize the fact that providing opportunities for education for an entire society is something that is always of enormous challenge. But I think the member here has particularly identified some of the limitations that are inherent in the bill that we're discussing: that is, quite frankly, the fact that the bill doesn't talk about the kind of innovation that the minister talks about. Those are not required legislative initiatives; those are things that a ministry and a minister can do.

What we're looking at is a particular piece of legislation that is essentially punitive in its nature. I think people need to understand that while the government can talk about all of the various programs that they are contemplating, I would stress that they're also asking us as legislators to look at a piece of legislation that essentially is the stick. So while the conversation might be about the carrot, the legislation is about the stick.

The fact that the member from Nickel Belt has been able to demonstrate that in other jurisdictions where people have looked at this as an opportunity—I have to



say that it just sounds like social engineering at its best. So now, in the same way that the parent grounds the student, the parent grounds his own offspring, the government comes along and says, "No, thou shalt not drive."

**The Deputy Speaker:** The member for Nickel Belt, you have two minutes to respond.

**Ms. Martel:** I want to thank those members who made an intervention.

I would say to the member from Durham that in the same briefing that was given by OSSTF to the ministry about this program, they did talk about the Ontario youth apprenticeship program and made a recommendation that additional targeted funding be provided for expansion of co-operative education and technical education programs and facilities.

Secondly, with respect to the comments made by the member from Don Valley West, I'm trying to reconcile the comments that were made by the minister, who said very clearly that part of equivalent learning was going to be partnerships between the ministry, post-secondary institutions and community groups. So who's paying for the partnerships between the ministry and the community groups? The examples and the information that you provided to the House, I say to the member, essentially, as far as I can understand, appear to be all school-based. Those are programs that are being provided within the four walls of the high school system. If you're seriously going to look at partnerships with community groups and having courses recognized because community groups are teaching skills, etc., then where's that money coming from? The money you've mentioned so far, as far as I can tell, all has to do with what school boards might be doing in this regard, but certainly not with what community groups might be able to do with that. So hopefully we're going to get a clarification.

Finally, I don't know why the minister hasn't met with this association. They wrote to the minister right after—

*Interjection.*

**Ms. Martel:** I know. I hope she will read my comments, because it's very clear they've got some serious issues, but they've got some good ideas. It seems to me they have been totally forgotten in terms of how this bill was drafted. I know they have, because there are issues in here that clearly, when the drafters were putting this together, they did not think at all about students who are being home-schooled. I would encourage the minister to meet with this association as soon as possible to hear about their concerns and to come to terms with how they might be responded to.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr. Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre):** I want you to know that even at this late hour, for us, I am delighted to speak to this bill. The first thing I want to say is I want to congratulate the minister and the parliamentary secretary, truly, for their sense of enthusiasm. I share that. I was a PA for a while in education; I was critic for education at one point. There is little, other than perhaps health and the environment, that is more important than education.

Seeing the job that my colleagues have done in terms of laying out the bill, I want to move in a little bit different fashion. I want to talk about the context. I want to talk about the social context that we face as Ontarians and that we face as Canadians down the line and how this fits with this bill.

As parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, I would like to give a few examples of the interrelationship of training, skills development, colleges, high schools, and even elementary schools in some cases, when we talk about lifelong learning and we talk about the opportunity for a seamless system with a variety and a range of opportunities, especially when we know that every single child and youngster and person learns somewhat differently from the next. We're moving away from this cookie-cutter approach to education and saying, "All children must, at this particular time, be able to answer these particular questions," even though we have some of that. I have my personal feelings on some of that. But I see the system moving more and more, with the leadership of the government, to develop a more flexible system with greater alternatives.

I would like to say to the member from Nickel Belt, by the way, just two comments, if I might. One is that she asked, where are the models for some of these things? My response is that when you talk about a philosophy of innovation, sometimes there are no other models. There are some, obviously, that we've looked at. We have people who do research in other jurisdictions within Canada, in the United States, in Europe, as far away as perhaps northern Europe and Japan. But sometimes we create our own, and that's what a pathfinder is. That's what leadership is all about, it seems to me. In innovation sometimes it means you can't necessarily look to another jurisdiction to copy what they do.

**2040**

I would like to read a very short comment:

"The Ontario school system must do more to facilitate careers for young people in the skilled trades, says the president of the Residential Construction Council of Central Ontario.

"Richard Lyall says creating more opportunities for high school students would not only help relieve the continuing shortage of skilled tradespeople over the next decade, but perhaps reduce the number of high school dropouts.

"I would say in the last few years, there's been an increase in interest in trades careers, although I'm not aware of any measures of that"—and I would be happy to tell Mr. Lyall that indeed there are measures. He refers to the stigma against the skilled trades. He says that from his point of view, that's largely mythological.

"People are recognizing that these are excellent jobs that pay well. The problem now is, 'How do I get into it?'"—talking about the students: "If they want to be a doctor or a lawyer, they know what steps to take, but not if they want to work in the trades." That's precisely what part of the program in this legislation is supportive of.



“When people say young people are not interested in the skilled trades, part of it is that the pathways aren't there.” This, we are addressing.

He goes to talk further about some of the programs already there within the system. I will address a few of them myself.

When we look at this particular piece of legislation, it has been said, and indeed it is true, that this is part of a much larger government initiative, as you well know, called student success. This is actually part of phase 3, introducing legislation that, if passed, “will require students to keep learning in a classroom, apprenticeship or workplace training program until age 18 or until they graduate.” This is a statement that was made by the minister, and a recent one was also talking about adding a new specialist high skills major to the Ontario secondary school diploma, expanding co-operative education and creating new dual-credit programs to allow students to earn several credits towards their diploma.

Often members don't read the full bill, and I must admit that it is true from time to time for me as well. But I did take the time to read this bill, and I don't know who the drafter was, but in particular I thought, “Maybe it wasn't a lawyer,” because the preamble to the bill was very succinct and essentially says what the bill is attempting to do. I'm not going to read all of it, because it's about a page long, but I'd just like to reiterate that this is why we're talking about this particular piece of legislation. I feel excited about it because we're moving into a sense that the systems, the organizations, of education themselves are becoming more of a learning organization. We talk about all of these beautiful phrases of “lifelong learning,” “organizational learning” and “adaptation”; if you're going to have vibrant company, then you have to have an organization that is growing and learning and changing as well. This bill moves very nicely down that particular path.

This bill says:

“The people of Ontario and their government:

“Believe that all secondary school pupils deserve a strong education system that provides them with a good outcome and prepares them for a successful future in their destination of choice, whether that is a work place with training, an apprenticeship, college,” university or otherwise;

“Recognize that the education system must challenge and engage pupils with different learning styles”—that's very important—“and make learning more relevant to them,” a big challenge for all of us and for the teachers.

“Recognize that the education system must continue to provide broad supports so pupils can succeed and graduate; ...

“Believe pupils must have a real choice through equivalent ways of learning that meet the requirements of the Ontario secondary school diploma”.

There are other points to be made. I would encourage my colleagues to take a look at, if nothing else, the preamble and the purpose of this particular bill.

We know that Canada is facing a shortage of about 25,000 workers, needed immediately. It's estimated that

by the end of the decade, we will be talking about close to a million skilled workers and people with advanced education being required in our workforce. If any of you doubt that, spend a bit of time taking a look at Calgary today. As a matter of fact, we don't have to go as far as Calgary. We can talk about parts of Ontario. As a matter of fact, we can talk about parts of Sudbury.

When I was in Sudbury last, I found it somewhat strange that the company was sending people to Europe for their technical people for mining and various aspects. It seems to me that we have to do a better job with linking up the programs in our colleges and universities to produce them, because I've met so many young people from Sudbury who want to stay and live in Sudbury because it's a great city. It's a fabulous place to live. They don't want to leave, but we have to increase and improve the job opportunities. There is one particular area that I think our education system can do a better job on, and I know we'll begin to address that.

Let me address an issue that was raised earlier, and the parliamentary assistant talked about it. This is the Student Success Commission, which was set up recently, composed of six members representing all of the teacher federations, six representing all levels of school board management. “The first of its kind in Ontario, the commission will allow for real engagement between high-level professionals in the education sector. It will focus on the success of all high school students.

“The commission was created to advise the minister with respect to the implementation ... of current and proposed student success initiatives.”

Let me read just a few recommendations that we have—and by the way, the member from Nickel Belt asked, “Where's the money?” This is part of the government's \$1.3-billion student success strategy. A lot of these perhaps have been ballpark figures that were worked out, but they recommend:

“—Student success leaders hired at every school board;

“—1,300 new high school teachers hired with 800 dedicated to student success programs”—the parliamentary assistant already talked about that;

“—Technological education equipment”—because we know if we don't have labs and if we don't have the equipment in the high schools that is somewhat up to date with the reality out there in the scientific world, the business community, wherever, then we're not going to helping our students; we're going to be creating gaps between the reality of what we're helping them to learn and the reality of the business community or the labour market;

“—131 lighthouse pilot projects aimed at increasing credit accumulation”—and this is, of course, an attempt to reduce the dropout rates—“... linking more programs with colleges and encouraging students who left school to return and complete their diploma requirements.”

It goes on, and there's a list of other things. I know one of the members—I don't want the member from Nickel Belt to think I'm picking on her, but I'd like to engage with her. I have a true respect for your critique,



which is usually very thoughtful. You ask, where does some of this money come from, when we talk about working with community groups or businesses or boards of trade or commerce or what have you. As a matter of fact, in Ottawa we just established a very interesting model, a brand new model, never been done before. It's being tried out in Ottawa—and this is in the post-secondary area: internationally trained people who need to get their skills upgraded somewhat. The shared costing is there, but I believe it's less expensive in the long term. The business community—or whatever the destination is—knows how costly it is to not have those skilled labourers, because they have to send people around the world; they have to train people from scratch. To immediately be part of a selection process to engage people who are a good way along the path of the skill level that's required for employment in fact is far more frugal, far more effective, we believe. That's why the model is being put into place, and that sort of thing will move ahead.

2050

Do we have the answers to all of those? No, we don't, because we are still working through some new ways of trying to engage students. As we said, they learn in different fashions, in different ways. Some people are far more hands-on; some people are far more academic; some people are far more cerebral. Others are far more visual in the way they learn. We know this. Those of us who have worked in human relations, communications and education know for sure that each child learns in a different fashion. That's the beauty of a skilled teacher, to be able to pick that out, where a couple of the kids get it and some of the others don't. The teacher spends time to make the connections with the mind of that other child who may understand it with an analogy to music or to sports or to some other example—maybe their own experiences.

Mr. Speaker, I see my time is rapidly moving along here, but I'd like to read a recommendation from the Rae report. I know the member from Nickel Belt will certainly be anxious to hear this. These are recommendations concerning apprenticeship training in Ontario:

"Recognize apprenticeship as a post-secondary destination.... Assign to colleges the government's role" that is presently being played "and outreach to employers" for those apprenticeship programs that are delivered by colleges as a core business, and "work collaboratively with colleges to designate apprenticeship as a post-secondary program."

Why is that important? I think it's important because, as I began with Mr. Lyall before, people have felt there is a stigma; there's no question about it. In Ontario we saw how people were almost abandoned, and it was a second-rate area to look at trades and other than university pursuits. Now we're recognizing that was one big mistake. We are recognizing that all new schools need to have opportunities for labs and shops that provide flexibility, to put in the kinds of equipment that technology will provide for you to be up to date with the community, the

business community, for example, or whatever it is, whether it's in automotive manufacturing, health care; it doesn't matter what it is. The technology is moving so quickly that it's a challenge to learn about the very process of education and the anticipation of what is happening. That's why it's so fundamental to have people from the community where the students may be employed. That's why it's so fundamentally important to have them involved in the process of helping to guide the content and the usage of certain machinery and pieces of equipment.

Therefore, these are going to be exciting times. I think we will all learn greatly by this experience. Frankly, I know it's a challenge for big government or big systems to demonstrate flexibility. The anathema of big government, often, is flexibility. It's not easy for it, because it wants to be fair to everybody, and in the name of being fair to everybody, sometimes it's not fair to some people who are the exceptions. That's what makes it a challenge for all of us in government to be able to respond in such a fashion to the differentials of the human condition.

Mr. Speaker, I will stop my comments now and welcome any comments or questions.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Questions and comments?

**Ms. Martel:** I listened intently to what the member from Ottawa Centre had to say. Let me offer the following comments in response. He said that sometimes in a philosophy of innovation there might not be models you can refer to and you have to create your own. I just want to make this point: Where we don't want to be is in a position where we're undermining the Ontario secondary school diploma. So I think you need to be really careful about what you're accepting as a program that's going to qualify for an equivalent learning program. I'm going to assume, although I've not had any discussions with the BC Ministry of Education, that that was the same thing they were thinking about when they were setting up their equivalent credentials for secondary school credits. If I look at BC, I would have to say that it looks like they've covered the waterfront in terms of looking at courses which would comply and could be recognized as equivalent programs.

So 408 programs are listed courses that count for a BC secondary school diploma as external credit courses, or equivalency learning courses, as we are defining them in this bill—408. That's a significant number. I would have thought they looked at all potentials and all opportunities, especially because they did the work between 1997 and 2001, so it's not that far past. But the problem I see is that the courses they came up with would probably be very ineffective as courses for students we would consider to be at risk and the ones I'm assuming we're trying to help.

So I say again, yes, you can look at other models, and maybe you create your own, except that I'm not sure how much room you really have to move. That's what my concern is. They had 408 courses that they thought were equivalent or had good value that weren't undermining their high school education diplomas, yet the over-



whelming majority became courses that would be the least likely to be accessible by kids who were at risk.

**Ms. Wynne:** I want to build on the comments of the member from Ottawa Centre and give some examples of programs that are already working. These are programs that were funded through the school-college work initiative in 2005-06. The first one is called Apprenticeship Plus. It's a partnership between Rainbow District School Board, Sudbury Catholic District School Board, the Conseil scolaire de district du Grand Nord de l'Ontario and the Conseil scolaire de district catholique du Nouvel-Ontario and Cambrian College. Some 25 grade 12 students will earn a combination of secondary and college-delivered basic cook apprenticeship in-school training, level one. Students will also receive a college certificate for the completion of the first semester of the advanced cook apprenticeship and may be eligible to write exemption tests for advanced standing in the advanced cook apprenticeship level. So that's a start.

This one is called Destination College. This is a partnership between Northern College and the District School Board Ontario North East and Northeastern Catholic District School Board: 15 students who are likely to become school leavers will complete secondary graduation requirements at Northern College and obtain advanced standing credits against the college diploma through team teaching between secondary school teachers and college staff.

This one is Trades, Technology and Transition: Simcoe County District School Board, Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board and Trillium Lakelands District School Board in partnership with Georgian College and Canadore College. Some 25 students will attend learning centres in college campuses at Georgian and Canadore Colleges to earn secondary and college credits with a focus on trades and technology.

The school-college work initiative has been in place for a number of years, but it has had a light shone on it and new money has gone to this initiative to develop programs like this around the province. So I think it's important that all members in this House recognize that these programs do work, and we're supporting them and nurturing them through our student success initiative.

**Mr. Gerry Martiniuk (Cambridge):** I'm pleased to comment on Bill 52. I think this bill is really one of those examples of good intentions making bad law. Everyone agrees that the intention to have our children go as far as possible in school or in trades is a very good thing. As a matter of fact, it's more than a good thing; it's an absolutely necessary talent to have when we're looking at competing on the world stage for good, worthwhile and well-paying jobs.

2100

So there is no doubt about the good intentions. The question is, can we tie these good intentions to penalize children, for they are children—so says the law—by removing from them a privilege that many of them require in order to make a living, to even have a part-time job?

Now, we have tied many things to drivers' licences. As a matter of fact, I sat on a committee where we proposed and did tie your licence to the support payments for your children, and upon default, your licence could be lifted. That was for the first time the tying of unrelated subjects, and here the person was penalized by losing his licence. I don't think the lack of initiative to continue at school is reason enough to penalize a child in this manner. I think it's punitive, and I think it will fail in its good intentions.

**Mr. Leal:** I was pleased to be here to listen to the remarks from the member from Ottawa Centre.

I hope the province of Ontario happened to be tuning in about 10 minutes ago when the member made his remarks, because he was quite articulate and quite clear. The member from Ottawa Centre has a lot of experience in this House and certainly has a very diversified background. Coming from Ottawa, he has been involved in a number of different activities over the years and has worked very closely with students and young people, so when he talks about a new model being developed in Ottawa to assist the training of individuals—young people—he knows what he is talking about because he has been working with them for so many years.

The real opportunity, as he's talked about, is to combine education with the ministry that he's currently with—training, colleges and universities. The first real opportunity is to bring the Ministry of Education together with the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities and to provide a platform and opportunity, particularly for those young people who are now seriously looking at the trades again and entering into apprenticeships. I mean, the potential there today is just unlimited.

If members had the opportunity perhaps to attend the lunch with the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, one of the issues that they raised today based on surveys with their members, not only here in Ontario but throughout Canada, is the shortage of skilled tradespeople, and it's becoming a very serious impediment for economic growth in these small businesses—not having a skilled labour force readily available to join these businesses and expand their growth opportunities. So anything we can do to address this—

**The Deputy Speaker:** Thank you. The member for Ottawa Centre, you have two minutes to respond.

**Mr. Patten:** Let me thank the members from Nickel Belt, Don Valley West, Cambridge and Peterborough for their comments.

To the member from Nickel Belt, I would say I think your caution is a good one, a wise one, for looking at the range of things and that they just aren't all grabbed at and put together.

I am pleased that we have one bit of a different structural thing, and that's the commission that is there to oversee that: the Student Success Commission. There are a lot of checks and balances and support in the system now that we didn't have before, so I am hopeful that will work its way out.

But it doesn't try to address—and I think the member from Don Valley West, who gave some examples of the



sorts of things that are going on, is saying that a good part of the system is your requirements, which are obligatory, and then you have some electives, and now there is an opportunity for some local reality of where you live, whether you're in a rural area or an urban area, whether you're in the north or in the south, wherever you are. And I think it's two co-op credits for experience in something that relates to your particular area. I think particularly of the rural area and the agricultural community, and there are numerous examples of that happening here. I'd be happy to share it.

To my friend from Cambridge, I would say that the privilege that you talk about and the possible punitive element, which is of course always there—my hope is that that will be debated further in committee. I think the spirit that the government and the minister are attempting to promote is that you want to be fair. You want to look at if there are real needs for exemption, and if it's not possible, this is truly punitive. If it defeats the purpose of engaging someone, then of course we wouldn't want to do that.

I've run out of time. I did want to say something to my friend from Peterborough, but I'll tell him privately.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mrs. Munro:** I'm pleased to have the opportunity to make a few comments with regard to Bill 52. I think that everyone, not only in this Legislature but most people in Ontario, probably recognizes the kind of importance that lifelong learning plays. Certainly I think that for about the last 20 years there has been a growing movement that recognizes how important it is. We have the futurists who have told us that, depending on your age, you probably have to look forward to as many as four or possibly five career changes in your life.

When I think back on my father-in-law and my own father, at that time, the expectation was that when you finished school, you found a job and you were there until you retired, not the whole notion of the kind of mobility that exists in today's workforce and the kinds of pressures that are on all of us to be current, to continue our learning and be prepared to make those kinds of shifts.

It's in the context of those kinds of imperatives that we're looking at this particular piece of legislation and its attempt to address some of these issues, recognizing that in the course of the last 20 or 25 years we've not only seen the globalization of our community, of our culture and of our economy, we've also come to recognize the fact that we must prepare our young people in their ability to compete globally. If you look at every level of education, from the local high school through to the community colleges and the universities, all provide various forms of continuing education. Sometimes it's referred to as a credit or non-credit, but it's still dealing with that whole issue of lifelong learning.

We know that many, many employers look at methods of providing opportunities for their staff to become better educated in the specifics that are required for that particular area of job.

We also have things like the re-emphasis on apprenticeship programs. I can recall when the Ontario youth apprenticeship programs were first begun and encouraged within the high school systems across the province. It was based on the fact that those had fallen into disuse. I can recall that in my own high school where I taught, the equipment, the machinery, the kinds of things the students had to work with dated back to the 1960s, and this was the 1980s and the 1990s. So in the 1990s, there was that recognition that we needed to get back out and do a better job of making those connections.

For me, one of the most alarming statistics was that the average age of an Ontarian going into an apprenticeship program was 27 years of age. That suggested to me that for approximately 10 years, these individuals had been searching for what kind of opportunity would best suit them. When you look at the context of today and the kind of social imperatives that we have, obviously the whole issue around education and that continuing lifelong education is important. But there have been many, many things, as I've mentioned, about the institutions that have responded to the need as well as, certainly, all of the e-learning that is available to all of us, the long-distance education programs that are available. So we've got many, many opportunities for people to access information and to provide greater skills training.

**2110**

But what we're looking at, and the dilemma, then, is on the issue of the kids who drop out: who they are and what's the best way to deal with them. One of the things I feel—and there are a number that I want to talk about—is in trying to develop a profile, if you like, of the student at risk, the student who is unlikely to be successful or want to stay in school. Certainly, some of those individuals have been promoted for what is referred to as social promotion, and they know they didn't understand what they took in a particular grade level. They know they start day one in the next year at a disadvantage. So they are constantly, then, under that pressure and under that cloud of not feeling that they are going to be successful. I think that is one of the most unfortunate things that has been perpetrated, quite frankly, for quite a long time.

When I appeared many years ago as a deputant to the Royal Commission on Learning, I suggested at the time that one of the responsibilities of a parent was to send his or her child well rested, well fed and emotionally stable. I know that is the ideal, and the reality is that there are many children who come to school missing any one or all three of those, but I think it's important to be reminded that that is a parental responsibility. When you look at what the schools are trying to achieve, as I was in making this presentation as a secondary school teacher, it is very difficult to do that without those kinds of prerequisites. There are also the students, I recall, who simply have the kind of personality that doesn't lend itself to the regular school program, and many of them find themselves being extremely successful once they go beyond school.

There are many programs that have been designed to try to capture the interests of those students who may be



at risk. I think back on programs such as alternative education, which did a wonderful job of students who had dropped out—and I think it's important that there is recognition—who then decided after a year or so that maybe that wasn't quite the best decision they made, but they needed to have an ability to fast-track. They needed to be able to choose courses that were appropriate for their learning style and for their goals.

There has also been the extraordinary expansion over the years of co-operative education. I think that program has done a great deal to give students the sense of the relevance of what they're doing in the classroom and what it means when you step outside, into the community. Certainly I saw many, many students who benefited enormously from even one semester of a co-op education opportunity.

When we were in government we introduced equivalency. This is an opportunity that was available, actually, to Canadians in most provinces but not in Ontario. This meant, then, that for those people who had life experiences, it would allow them to be able to look at an achievement level without having to go back and take grade 10 math, or something like that, as a method of making sure that door is always open to lifelong learning. That's what the GED program does for young adults.

As a member of the former government, the whole notion of creating mandatory volunteer hours was one that allowed students to step out into the community. As a teacher, when I had people come from various agencies within our community to give students a sense of what was available and what were the needs of our community in the broader sense, they found that extremely valuable. It's the same with being able to provide volunteer hours. So I think we need to look at this piece of legislation in the context of a great deal that has gone on before in attempting to find those ways where we will provide the best for our young people.

There has been some comment made, and I would be remiss if I didn't echo the sentiments expressed already, with regard to the cost and complexity of equivalent learning. I've given some examples to demonstrate that there are avenues and doors that are open for students who find that the regular classroom program is not suitable for them. When we look at what the government has laid out, there are two issues around the question of equivalent learning. You have to be very, very careful, I think, (a) in terms of the cost and (b) in terms of the quality of what actually constitutes equivalent learning. I fear that it may be what one of my friends describes as "same dog, new hair," that you are looking at maybe an elaborate process which at the end of the day isn't going to do much more than what is currently available in terms of choice. I think we have to be very, very careful about processes that simply become very bureaucratically driven or open to question in terms of their equivalency.

I'd like to talk for a moment too about the whole principle that's behind this bill of enforcement, of making people stay at school. The bill is silent on the issue of when is a student a dropout. My experience is

that students don't wake up one morning and say, "Okay, this is it. I'm going to the main office in the school. I'm now leaving." It's generally a drifting. It's generally something like, well, they don't go for a couple of days and then they're missing their assignments, or maybe they think they'll get caught up on them. So, "Maybe I'll go next week," and that sort of spreads out.

When is a student actually a dropout? And then how do you find them? There are attendance counsellors attached to each board, as I understand—certainly in the one that I'm most familiar with. It was always a difficulty in the fact that kids move away if they're actually giving up. They'll go and live with another parent or somebody else, but they're gone. Then the question becomes that not only are they now actually a dropout, but how do you find them? What is the cost of enforcement? Those are all issues in terms of the notion that you're going to be able to just have a simple process that says, "Okay, this person has gone."

When this person has gone, apparently, now we deal with the issue of the driver's licence. It's rather interesting to look at some of the public comments that have been made about trying to find a relationship between staying in school and having your driver's licence. I'd like to take a moment to quote from Kate Heartfield, who was writing in the *Ottawa Citizen* on Tuesday, December 20. She says, "Okay, so anyone who doesn't want to take their 'learning as far as possible' shouldn't be allowed to drive? By that logic, the province should remove licences from smart high school graduates who choose not to go to university, or from adults who stubbornly refuse to learn how online banking works."

2120

"Pursuing an education has never been a 'corresponding obligation' for the privilege of driving a car. Mr. Kennedy just invented it. The students to whom this rule applies could have grandparents who didn't finish high school, but have been driving" a car "since the Korean War. There is no connection between writing an essay and handling a car. They're both very useful skills, but one is not necessary for the other."

"Dropping out of school has inherent consequences: the missed opportunity for an education, the low chances for good employment and a fulfilling career. Truancy is punishable by fines and probation. There's no need to impose another consequence—an arbitrary one at that."

"Government by whim is no way to instill respect for authority. When a teenager refuses to let her sister use the phone, an appropriate punishment might be the removal of phone privileges. Removing the car she needs to get to her summer job would be cruel and ineffective."

"Since the province seems to want to play the role of the parent, it should at least try to be a good parent. It should restrict itself to punishments that have some connection to the crime...."

I think that probably demonstrates, in a way, the leap between the notion of staying in school and losing your licence. I also think it's a rather interesting thing, because to me, when the bill was first introduced, one of the



things I thought of was the fact that it presumes all kids have driving licences; it presumes they have families where a car is available to them. I would suggest that that's simply not the case. There are many, many students who might fall into the category of being at risk for whom this penalty is absolutely meaningless.

The real challenge then is the question of the relevance: Where are the jobs? What's the future? It is speaking to things like that that frankly is important to kids. They understand that it is a challenge, that there is the need for lifelong learning, that therefore they should stay in school, but that will happen with a carrot, not with a stick.

As I say, there is no correlation between driving a car and staying in school. In fact staying in school has everything to do with motivation; it has everything to do with making sure that that's why you want to go to school: because there is that motivation. Whether you have a driver's licence or whether you have access to a car has absolutely nothing to do with why you should stay in school.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Questions and comments?

**Ms. Martel:** I want to thank the member from York Mills for her contributions, particularly for her insight regarding what she saw when she was in the classroom with respect to decisions that young people make about dropping out.

I just want to quote a little bit further from the Ottawa Citizen, from the same article that she was using. I really find the government's intention around linking the driver's licence to staying in school such a silly thing to be doing, especially when there's no evidence from the US, despite what the minister had to say tonight, that any of this works in convincing students to stay in school.

Kate Heartfield also said the following:

"So teenagers who do drop out—the most alienated, troubled kids for whom the rules mean nothing—will find they cannot even take a driver's licence test, or get a day job. They'll drive without licences and take jobs at night if they can find them. Or they'll end up on the streets.

"This legislation and the Tories' Safe Schools Act are two sides of the same bad coin. The province is pushing and pulling young people in and out of school.

"Mr. Kennedy does also want to address the problems they're having while they're in school. A more flexible and interesting curriculum could" probably help.

"I doubt it can eliminate it. There are 16- and 17-year-old dropouts who are struggling with depression, parent-hood, addiction, or sheer listlessness. Some of these young people might not be ready for grade 11 or 12; a year off to get well or just to grow up might be the best thing for some of them. Not everyone will finish high school on the government's schedule.

"Citizens grant the provincial government the power to license drivers, in the interest of safety. They don't grant the government that power so it can punish and isolate troubled teens."

I thought that Kate Heartfield described it really well in those remarks. I don't understand why the government

thinks somehow that this punitive measure is really going to entice kids to stay in school. I think quite the opposite is going to happen. They're going to see it as very punitive and be even more compelled to drop out.

**Mrs. Carol Mitchell (Huron-Bruce):** I am very pleased to rise this evening to speak to Bill 52 in support. I do want to thank the member for York North for her comments, speaking about what we can do to move our young adults forward. That's clearly what I heard.

I want to take this opportunity to talk about a program that's available. The Bluewater school board is one of the school boards that I have the privilege of representing at this Legislature. I have five school boards in total in the riding of Huron-Bruce.

There is a specific program that I do want to make reference to that is happening through the Kincardine high school. What they have done is a masonry program. They take 12 students who have had, I would say, the most difficulty in school in what I would call a regular four-walls standard work area, and dropouts are very high. What they have done is taken these students and gone out into the community, and they actually do, all morning, masonry work. This program has been going on for the last couple of years. I had the opportunity to go and meet the students. They were able to tell me their stories about how this had changed their lives, which have turned around entirely their outlook and what they will bring forward.

We know that the traditional methods are not always what work for everyone. What this bill does is give opportunities to all of our students in recognition that we have different needs. When I look at the masonry program in Kincardine and how successful it has been, we need to do more. This bill does that.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Martiniuk:** Thank you very much once again, Mr. Speaker, for the second-last word of the evening.

I'd like to thank my colleague the member for York North once again. She brings to this place a wealth of experience as a practical teacher, a teacher in the classrooms; not theory, but practice.

One of the points she raises is something that occurred to me she defined, in my mind, to a greater degree. Like most of us here I spent some time in school, a little longer than I wanted to on some occasions. I get this picture in my mind of individuals who don't want to be in the situation they're in. I can recall students—they were nice people. However, for whatever reason, through intelligence, through motivation, they just did not wish to be in school. Unfortunately, not all of them, some of them did play a most disruptive role in the classroom.

So we're asking our teachers, who work so very hard, to stretch the limits of their talent, to stretch the limits of their experience, by attempting to control the situation with individuals who do not want to be in that situation and could prove disruptive to other students in the classroom. It's a practical matter but it's something that must be addressed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Questions and comments? The member for York North, you have two minutes to respond.

**Mrs. Munro:** I appreciate the comments made by the members from Nickel Belt, Huron-Bruce and Cambridge. I found it interesting that the member from Huron-Bruce made reference to this program, which I think I've seen demonstrated. I think they were in Toronto a while ago, a year or so ago. It was a good demonstration of the kind of flexibility that I would argue exists in our schools at this point.

One of the points I made was that stepping into this whole, rather murky area of equivalent learning obviously is of great concern for people in terms of how it's going to be. We heard this evening of examples in other

jurisdictions. I think the member from Huron-Bruce has simply supported my point, which is that a great deal of flexibility and opportunity currently exists. It is that kind of work that needs to be continued. It's not the kind of costly programs and questionable issues around developing equivalent learning, and it's not about providing some kind of costly punitive system because obviously, as I've mentioned, the question of compliance, the question of taking away the driver's licence or preventing it has nothing to do with staying in school. I think that, frankly, the bill is taking us in the wrong direction instead of looking at and celebrating what we have.

**The Deputy Speaker:** It being 9:30 of the clock, this House is adjourned until 10 of the clock, June 1.

*The House adjourned at 2132.*



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